

IRISH EDUCATION

A HISTORICAL SURVEY

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PREFACE

THIS book is intended to supply a long-felt want for a single-volume survey of Irish Educational History, and I herewith acknowledge my indebtedness to those scholars whose research in special fields has provided much of the material for this work. At the end of each chapter I have given a brief list of the authorities who ought to be consulted by those desiring further information. I am very grateful to Professor R. J. Fynne, of Trinity College, Dublin, for his assistance and encouragement, and to my wife for her invaluable aid in preparing the manuscript for publication.

J. J. A.

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CHAPTER I

THE NATIVE SCHOOLS

EVERY society, no matter how primitive its form, inherits some educational system by which the knowledge and practice of one generation is handed on to its successor. As the generations pass, and acquired knowledge increases, educational systems change, re-orientating themselves to every new influence whether internal or external. This has been proved to be as true in the history of Ireland as ever in the history of any country. So convinced were the generality of Irishmen that all Irish cultural history began with St. Patrick that in former days the fact of Ireland's having an organised educational system long before 432 would have been most difficult to prove. Not so to-day, when the revival of the old native language has led men and scholars to examine more closely into our national origins.

In Pre-Christian Ireland instruction was in the hands of two classes, the Druids and the *Filidh*, or poets, and one person often combined the characteristics of the two groups. The teachers were in general peripatetic, lecturing and teaching in the open air and being followed by their pupils from place to place.¹ In these journeys the poets were often accompanied by assistants who looked forward to the day when they could go out on their own, gathering pupils for themselves. As the years progressed the teaching profession seems to have become hereditary in certain families, of whom

1 O'Curry: *Manners and Customs of the Native Irish*, 48 ff.

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in later Gaelic history the O Clerys, the O Coffeys, and the O Mulcronys appear to have been the chief.²

Quite early in history it was the pride of the High King to maintain his court in the style of the Renaissance princes. Poets, historians, and lawyers as well as Druids and musicians were permanent members of the royal household, even at the provincial courts. It was looked on as the bounden duty of a monarch to be a distinguished patron of learning and culture, whilst the educated man was so respected that ultimately the country became overrun with representatives of the cultured class. In the reign of Conor Macnessa it was asserted that more than one-third of the men of Ireland belonged to the two poetic classes of *Filidh* and *Ollamh*. The significance of this is only realised when it is remembered that the scholar was entitled to his support at the expense of the unlearned class—a state of affairs which continued to exist in certain parts of Ireland until less than two centuries ago. One can imagine how heavily the expense of the ever-continuing visits of these poets and their pupils must have become to the people of the South, East and West of Ireland, who were most vociferous in complaint. So serious did the situation become that the poets thought of leaving *en masse* for Scotland, but instead Conor Macnessa invited them to visit his people in Ulster, and there it is recorded they remained, being hospitably entertained for seven years. At the end of which time, it can be presumed, the old love of learning in the South re-asserted itself and the poets could visit once again with the certainty of a well-fed reception.³

The learned class was thus dependent upon the support of the agricultural population, and the poet was compelled to see that his pupils were equally supported with himself. In return the pupil was expected, when old age attacked his master, to offer material aid to the old man's support—one of the pleasantest traits in the reciprocal duties of the poetic class. The result

² Joyce: *Social History of Ancient Ireland*, p. 419.

³ O'Curry: *op. cit.*, p. 55.

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of a system like this must have been to create the closest of relationships between master and pupil, especially as the full course of Gaelic literature extended over a period of twelve years and the greater part of the course was committed to memory in poetic form, handed down not in writing, but from mouth to mouth. This is not to say that the early Irish *Filidh* did not have any written literature. They certainly had some books before the coming of St. Patrick, for in the *Tripartite Life* of that Saint it is recorded that "during the contest of the Saint with the Druids at Tara, King Laegaire proposed that one of Patrick's books and one of the Druids' should be thrown into the fire as a sort of ordeal."⁴

As time progressed Irish education began to take characteristic form. The *Filidh* continued to make their journeys through the country, but as well certain fixed places came to be famous for their schools. Thus we are told that Conor MacArt, King of Ireland 254-277 A.D., founded three schools, one for Military Science, one for Law, and one for General Literature. These three were apparently the prototypes of the Bardic Schools which developed after the Convention of Drum Ceatt in 574. This Convention was entirely dominated by the masterful mind of Dallan Forgail, *Ard-Ollave* or Chief Poet of All Ireland. Long and seriously was it debated whether the *Filidh*, who had of late proved themselves both exacting and quarrelsome, should be exiled into Scotland, as had once so nearly happened before. The proposal was defeated by the casting vote of St. Columba, who himself had been trained by a wandering *Fíle*. Nevertheless as a result of the Convention, it has been pointed out, they were changed from a race of wandering visitants into a privileged class of letters and learning.⁵ The organisation sponsored by Dallan Forgail and gradually established subsequent to Drum Ceatt was the settled form of the Irish Bardic Schools as long as they continued

⁴ Quoted in Joyce: op cit., p. 396.

⁵ Curtis. *History of Ireland*, p. 14.

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to exist. The Chief Post provided for Chief schools and colleges in each of the five provinces into which Ireland was divided—and under them there were to be a large number of subordinate schools—at least one for each *tuath* or cantred. All were to be endowed by the neighbouring landlords, the teaching was to be in the hands of laymen, and the schools were to be divided into departments of Literature, History and Poetry; later these divisions came more commonly to be those of Law, Classics, and Gaelic Literature.⁶

O'Curry, in his *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, has left us a detailed examination of the nature and organisation of one of the Bardic Schools after 475. The Chief Master of one of the provincial schools was termed the *Fer-Leighinn* or *Drumchli*, and to qualify for his post was required to be a master of the whole course of Gaelic literature in prose and verse, and as well he was expected to have a good knowledge of Ecclesiastical Latin and of the Books of the Holy Scripture. There were at least five other classes of teachers enumerated by O'Curry:

- (i) The *Caogdach* or "fifty man," who was the lowest in rank as he was only required to chant the one hundred and fifty psalms.
- (ii) The *Foghlantidh*, or "scholar" who taught ten out of the twelve books of the College course of the *Fochoire* or native education.
- (iii) The *Staraidh* or "historian," who also taught thirty lessons in Divinity.
- (iv) The *Foirceallaidh*, or "lecturer" who taught grammar, criticism, enumeration, astronomy, and orthography.
- (v) The *Saoi Canoine* or "Professor of Divinity" who taught the Canons and the Gospel of Jesus.

All of these were subordinate to the *Drumchli* who was apparently expected to be the master of the entire

⁶ Joyce: *op. cit.*, p. 419.

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course taught by his assistants.' In general twelve years seems to have been the accepted length of Bardic education, and seven different tests of ability had to be passed before a pupil's education could be considered satisfactorily completed.

But as well as the course in Literature we have outlined above, the Brehon Laws provided for the teaching to the sons of gentlemen of horsemanship, chess, swimming, and the use of arms. Daughters were to be taught sewing and embroidery, and class distinctions were to be carefully observed. Thus, the sons of the tenant class had not only to wear clothes different to those of the gentlemen's sons, but also they were not to be instructed in horsemanship, though one would have imagined that in the Ireland of the time that would have been an essential accomplishment

Despite the tremendous influence the Bardic Schools exercised on the generality of the Irish people it is much more difficult to assess their educational value than it is that of any other educational systems at various times at work in Ireland. It was through them that the legendary stories of Ireland's mythological history were preserved in verse, but equally it was not through them that Ireland achieved the proud position of "Island of Saints and Scholars" in the eighth and ninth centuries. In general Irish educational reputation was obtained through the monastic schools, it was only the native Irish themselves who fully realised the value of their own inherited system. It preserved all that was best in ancient Irish culture and tradition, and when the monastic schools became first tainted with a pro-Norman viewpoint and then were abolished altogether, the native Irish had no other means of education without detriment either to their cultural or religious heritage. This very desertion, first by choice and later by compulsion, of the Irish native cause on the part of the monastic schools materially increased the survival value of the Bardic schools. They were still a conspicuous feature of Irish culture in the reign of

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Queen Elizabeth, and the English Jesuit, Campion, bears evidence to the quality of the Latin taught at these schools, though Spenser the poet had a very poor opinion of their moral influence.

Henry VIII did a great deal to give the death blow to the Bardic School system, chiefly because it kept alive the national and anti-English spirit, and in 1563 his daughter Elizabeth caused the Earl of Desmond to give an undertaking that no bards would be permitted to exist in the Counties of Cork, Limerick and Kerry.⁸ The progress of the Reformation caused them to receive more and more attention from the English Crown until their existence became wellnigh impossible, and only a very small percentage of their work was perpetuated in the Courts of Poetry whose good work in the preservation of the native literature has lasted almost to our own day—the last relic of the old Bardic Schools. As an example of the way in which Irish poetry of an educational nature was preserved by word of mouth, Professor Tomas O Maille has published side by side two texts of a poem on the geography of the world and the Day of Judgment by a certain Donnchadh Mor O Dalaigh, who died in 1244. One version was taken from a manuscript in the British Museum and the other taken down from the recital by Padraic O Hurnaidhe, a County Galway *seanchaidhe*. The differences between the two versions are trifling, though O Hurnaidhe had learned the poem from his grandfather who got it from somebody who had read the manuscript.⁹ Thus the poem could still be recited by heart after seven centuries, and in a similar fashion a great deal of the Irish culture was retained by word of mouth. There are still frequent records of Gaelic poets of this kind right up to the famine, but the dissolution of the majority of the Gaelic speaking families thereafter almost made the Saturday night recitals things of the past.

From the reign of Henry VIII it became increasingly difficult, as we have said, for the Bardic Schools to

⁸ Dowling: *The Hedge Schools of Ireland*, p. 6.

⁹ *Ibid*: p. 11.

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continue to exist, because of their perpetuation of the native spirit. Alternative education, unfortunately, from the native point of view, there was none, since national patriotism now became also associated with religious feeling, as the Reformation became in the eyes of the Gaelic Irish entirely associated with the English conquest. For a period the Irish were without any form of native education, and then in the days of Cromwell we hear of "the Popish schoole Masrs," who taught "the Irish youth, trayning them up in superstician, Idolatry, and the evil customs of the Nacion."¹⁰ These seem to be the first of what were later to be termed the Hedge Schoolmasters, though these latter really only came into prominence early in the eighteenth century. By that time, as we shall show elsewhere, English governmental policy was straining every nerve to prevent the propagation of the Roman Catholic religion in any part of the British Isles, and as a result of a series of repressive laws it was illegal for Roman Catholics to teach, and any householder who harboured one who presumed to do so could suffer heavy penalties.

One of the most characteristic features of the Irish spirit from the earliest times was unquestionably a love of learning. What then was to be done in these circumstances? There were two alternatives. Students could either go abroad or be secretly educated at home. Although travelling for the purpose of study was also made illegal by the Dublin government, many of those who could afford it got away to the various Irish colleges on the continent; but for the poor there was nothing but illegal education at home. Wandering scholars began to traverse the countryside, setting up school on the sunny side of some hedge in fine weather, with one boy keeping guard against any government spy, granting holidays when it rained, and visiting in the farm houses the country over during the winter. As the century progressed and the laws against education were less severely enforced, barns and cabins began to be used as schoolhouses, until at the end of the

¹⁰ Quoted in Dowling, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

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eighteenth century some few of the masters had quite well-equipped schools.

These schools had achieved an established position when Catholic Emancipation and the general reform movement of the early nineteenth century gave the control over Irish education very largely to the Church. Considering their circumstances, the Hedge Schoolmasters had done a wonderful work. The curriculum was wide and varied. Some sections of the country became especially famous for their classical learning, especially the counties of Kerry and Tyrone. English travellers even bear witness to excellent Latin scholars being encountered who knew no English. Next to Latin the most important subject taught in the Hedge Schools was arithmetic, at which the Irish in the eighteenth century acquired a notable reputation.

Naturally everyone who attended a hedge school did not necessarily follow the same curriculum. In general the choice of subjects must have been determined by the pupils' financial position. Different fees were established for the various subjects, ranging from 1s. 8d. per quarter for spelling to 11s. per quarter for Latin. Reading cost about 2s. per quarter and arithmetic varied in price from 4s. 4d. to 7s. for the same period. The income of the schoolmasters was never very great. Dowling, in his *Hedge Schools of Ireland*, reckons the average salary as being about £50 per annum, but many hedge schoolmasters are known to have made as little as £5 a year.¹¹ These figures, of course, must be taken with caution. The master usually received free lodgings and considerable entertainment from the local parents, often indeed receiving so much in the way of foodstuffs as to be in a position to sell off a surplus.

At the close of the eighteenth century the Hedge Schoolmaster had achieved a notable position in the various parishes of the country. Socially he was reckoned next after the local priest, and he was frequently in demand as secretary to the priest, as legal adviser, and for the task of drawing up wills and marriage settle-

¹¹ Dowling: op. cit., p. 52.

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ments. Many humorous stories are told of the consequent conceit of these local luminaries. The title "Philomath" was taken by all the more outstanding, and no signature was ever affixed without that addition. That it was oftentimes deserved cannot be denied, and William Carleton, who so accurately portrays Irish peasant life in the early years of the nineteenth century, is at his best when he describes the class of which he was once a member. He writes in the thirties of the last century—just at the time the National Board of Education was being established: "It is an indisputable fact that Hedge Schoolmasters were as superior in literary knowledge and requirements to the class of men who are now engaged in the general education of the people as they are beneath them in moral and religious character."¹² This moral inferiority was in large measure due to their addiction to good whiskey. This addiction, too, was demanded by the Irish peasantry, Carleton asserts, on the principle that the best business man was always the best drinker, a principle which would hardly be accepted anywhere else in the world except Ireland.

The method of appointment to the Mastership of a Hedge School was, to say the least, most interesting. The boy who intended to take up school teaching as a profession was usually marked out by his master early in his scholastic career. When the pupil imagined himself the superior of his teacher in knowledge he challenged him to a verbal disputation, which took place generally on a Sunday or other holiday, and which was presided over by the local priest or by a neighbouring Hedge Schoolmaster of repute. Should the pupil be acknowledged the victor in the trial of wits, he would leave the parish and betake himself to another teacher. He might continue in this fashion, learning from and then challenging various teachers until he felt he was fully qualified for his life work. Then his challenge, which might perhaps be against his earliest mentor,

¹² Carleton: *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, Vol. II, p. 200.

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bore a two-fold import. Not only was it a sign of a feeling of intellectual superiority, but also it implied, if successful, the taking over of the position of the defeated teacher. Only in this way could a would-be Hedge Schoolmaster obtain a post, unless he established himself in entirely untouched territory.

The master appointed was not always an unmixed blessing to the countryside. In the times of rebellion and agitation more often than not he was the secretary of whatever local revolutionary unit existed, by his choice of text books he unquestionably did a great deal to counterbalance the effect of the teaching of the Church, as the reading matter in the Hedge Schools was, according to Carleton, most pernicious in its interpretation of history, religion, and morality. Naturally a strong and almost legitimate anti-protestant bias existed, but too often the stories in common use were lurid and highly coloured accounts of murder, robbery, and theft.¹³ Then, too, it is held by some modern scholars that the Hedge Schoolmaster was largely responsible for "beating Irish out of the country." That he was supported in this by the pupils' parents is but poor justification for the anti-national and anti-cultural outlook which such scholars as the Hedge Schoolmasters should have been the first to condemn. The method employed to ensure that no Irish was spoken by the child, even in his own home or outside the school walls, was well qualified to achieve its aims. It was customary for children to have small sticks or tablets suspended from their necks, and notches were cut in these every time the children spoke Irish at home. On coming to school the next day the master would see at a glance whether the pupil had been using the forbidden language or no. Each notch usually meant the reward of a stroke of the cane.¹⁴ From the purely economic point of view the teachers could hardly be blamed. Public opinion in the early nineteenth century

¹³ Carleton : op cit , p 249.

¹⁴ T. P. O'D. : Article in *Irish Independent*, p 9, June 27, 1936.

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was unquestionably in favour of the English language as a means of getting on in the world, and the Hedge Schools were forced to conform with public opinion.

The punishment inflicted, with the connivance and support of the parents, for speaking the national language must seem rather harsh to modern ears, but its truth is substantiated by no less an authority than Dr. MacHale, the Archbishop of Tuam, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, who suffered from it himself in his youth. The fact is, however, as Carleton says: "Indeed the instances of atrocious cruelty in hedge schools were almost incredible,"¹⁵ and this can hardly be wondered at when we remember that the outstanding teacher whom Carleton remembered—the great O'Brien—couldn't live without poteen. He never took part in any of the intellectual contests without consuming at least a pint of that liquor beforehand. With cruelty was associated a great deal of gross partiality. The sons of the comfortable farmers with whom the teacher lived, were pampered and petted, whilst the poor and the weak, as in all competitive civilisations, went to the wall.

However, all these blemishes can do but little to offset the unquestioned services given by the Hedge Schoolmaster to Irish education. His natural pride was so exalted by his surroundings that he cannot but have felt of a different species to the common run by virtue of his great learning. For the few who were cruel and partial there must have been many whose pupils could rise up and call them blessed. They offered the privileges of education, when the alternative was ignorance or loss of faith. They kept alive the lamp of knowledge in the island which had once been seen in the fullest glare of its brightest light. For the majority of the people of Ireland they provided, often at great personal sacrifice even if at some personal self-satisfaction, an opportunity for cultural advancement dear to their hearts and without danger to their

¹⁵ Carleton : op. cit., p. 248.

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faith. The people of Gaelic Ireland suffered much in those days for their faith and culture ; their teachers are deserving of all respect.

Recommended for further reading :

Dowling, P. J. : *The Hedge Schools of Ireland*. Dublin, 1935.
The relevant chapters in :

O'Curry, E. : *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*.
London and Dublin, 1873.

Corkery, D. : *The Hidden Ireland*. Dublin, 1925. Chaps.
III and IV.

Carleton, Wm : *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*
Vol. II. Dublin, 1844.

Hyde, D. : *A Literary History of Ireland* London, 1906.

Joyce, P. W. : *Social History of Ancient Ireland*. London,
1903.

CHAPTER II

THE MONASTIC SCHOOLS

THE monastic schools brought to Ireland the greatest cultural and intellectual reputation which it has ever been the privilege for such a small island to deserve. For a brief period in the seventh and eighth centuries Ireland could in truth claim to be the University of the western world, could proudly assert that hers was the only territory in the whole of Christendom where the light of classical learning was still permitted to shine undimmed. The ravages of the Danes and of the Northmen ultimately dealt to this culture the same devastating blows as did the Huns, the Goths, the Alans and the Vandals to that of the European mainland.

The question of how classical learning first came to Ireland has long been a vexed one to scholars. Although it established itself quickly in the monastic houses founded by St. Patrick and his successors, it quite obviously did not come with Ireland's patron saint, who always admitted himself an untutored man. There are in those writings which can unquestionably be attributed to the authorship of Patrick himself, allusions to a pre-existent Christianity, and to men who seem to have possessed a higher degree of culture than he did.¹⁶ A solution to the problem of the origin of these men appears to have been found in a Leyden manuscript which came to light towards the end of the last century, and which presented a view which has gained the support of Meyer, Zimmer, James, and other scholars in the early Celtic period. This manuscript states that as a result of the barbarian invasions "all the learned men on this side of the sea fled, and in the

¹⁶ *Cambridge Med. History*: Vol. III, Ch. XIX, p. 501 (M. R. James).

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countries beyond the sea, namely Ireland and wherever else they betook themselves, brought to the inhabitants of those regions an enormous advance in learning."¹⁷ No other evidence to support the contention that these exiles from Gaul brought to Ireland the knowledge of classical learning has been found, although we do know that in the latter part of the fifth century a Gaulish rhetorician named Bachan was teaching Latin in a monastery in the Celtic parts of Britain named Llan-carfan. Whatever we may think of this opinion the plain fact remains that when Irish history becomes easily intelligible in the seventh century the outstanding Irish scholars are masters not only of Latin but also of Greek, although on the European continent the Council of Carthage (436) had strictly forbidden such pagan studies as would be entailed in making such achievements possible. The only difficulty in accepting this view is that, before the period of the barbarian invasions, which as regards the exiles from Gaul can be taken as the twenty years at the opening of the fifth century, a certain Aethicus of Istria, a Christian philosopher of the fourth century, some would place him as early as the second or third, wrote a *Cosmography of the World* in which he states that on leaving Spain he hastened to Ireland where he spent some time "examining their books."¹⁸ This would seem to presume books in Ireland at least one hundred years before Patrick, whereas the Gaulish exiles are only supposed to have arrived in the immediate thirty years before Patrick's mission. So little is known of Palladius, and his mission to the Irish "believing in Christ" that it offers no clue to these difficulties. All we can accept is that both Christianity and classical culture had found some kind of a home in parts of Ireland by 432, and we can only presume that the spread of the Christian religion through the enthusiasm and zeal of Patrick and his companions and scholars was accompanied by a similar spread of classical culture.

¹⁷ Meyer: *Learning in Ireland in the Fifth Century*, p. 6.

¹⁸ Graham: *The Early Irish Monastic Schools*, p. 9.

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There is no evidence that St. Patrick personally founded any of the Irish monastic schools, though that of Armagh was founded as early as about 450 A.D., with St. Benignus as Headmaster.¹⁹ The leading scholars of the period succeeding St. Patrick's death all went to Britain for their education, as, in the main, the Church founded by St. Patrick was founded on a diocesan and not on a monastic basis. Mr. Meissner holds that the monastic influence of Irish ecclesiastical development was derived from the Scottish foundations of Candida Casa, which would imply a British impulse to Irish schools.²⁰ Be that as it may, Romans, Gauls, Franks, Saxons, and Egyptian monks all died in Ireland in the early seventh century so there must have been many contributing factors in the development of early monastic institutions.²¹

These monastic schools soon set up a standard of education and of knowledge which became the admiration of the learned world. The old Irish alphabet—*ogam*—a purely native invention, was of use only on stones and wood and was succeeded early in the seventh century by the present Irish alphabet, a beautiful modification of the Roman one of the day.²² The spread of the new medium for writing was undertaken with conspicuous success by the Christian missionaries and the *ogam* was quickly superseded. Yet even the *ogam* was based on the Roman alphabet, for Q, Z, and Y are all represented though not in the earliest fragments that have been found. Its distinctly Irish character has enabled historians to follow the marauding footsteps of early Celtic invaders of Britain on their course through Wales and Devonshire.

Armagh, although the first in point of foundation of the early monastic schools, was not in the sixth and seventh centuries by any means the most important of them, though it acquired that position in the eighth.

19 Graham : op. cit., p. 26.

20 Phillips : *History of the Church of Ireland*, Vol. I, p. 201.

21 Graham : op. cit., p. 84.

22 Hyde : *A Literary History of Ireland*, p. 105.

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It has been computed that at one time or another there were as many as one hundred and sixty-four famous schools, among whom we can only comment on a very few.²³ Mr. Meissner contends that the most important of these were the four following, which we will consider as exemplifying the qualities of them all.²⁴

- (i) *St. Enda's of Aran*, which was founded before the end of the fifth century. St. Enda had been a pupil in the Scottish monastery of Candida Casa, to which reference has already been made. His most distinguished pupil was St. Ciaran of Clonmacnoise.
- (ii) *St. Finian's of Clonard*. Probably the most famous school of them all, it was founded about the year 520. St. Finian was educated in Britain with three saints who were in touch with the Gaulish rhetorician Bachan who has been mentioned before. St. Columba was the outstanding alumnus of this school.
- (iii) *The School of Clonmacnoise* was founded by St. Ciaran in 548.
- (iv) *Bangor Abbey* was founded by St. Comgall, an Irish Pict, in 568. St. Columbanus went forth from it to evangelise the continent.

To these schools students came, not merely from all over Ireland, but also from every corner of the Christian world. The Venerable Bede tells us that in the seventh and eighth centuries many of the English nobility and also of the lower ranks retired to Ireland where some of them devoted themselves to the monastic life while others applied themselves to study, going about from one master's cell to another's.²⁵ St. Aldhelm wrote "The coming and going of those who pass by the ship's track, the whirlpools of the sea, hence and thence, hither and thither, is so frequent that it resembles

²³ Graham: op. cit., p. 37 (quoting Ware).

²⁴ Phillips: op. cit., Vol. I, p. 208-210.

²⁵ *Ibid*: Vol. I, p. 211.

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some brotherhood of bees, busily storing their nectar in the comb.”²⁶ Florence MacCarthy asserts that at one period the great monastic school at Armagh, which in the seventh and eighth centuries became outstanding amongst the Irish schools, had over 7,000 students. The memory of the old division of the Primatial city into nations representing the visiting scholars is kept green to-day when the principal streets of the city are still called English Street, Scotch Street and Irish Street, representing the predominant racial strains in the old monastic school.

Armagh achieved its enviable scholastic status almost entirely through its historical associations and it fully repaid its debt to Ireland's patron saint, with its world fame throughout the seventh and following centuries. At a time when the Roman Church was strongly prejudiced not merely against pagan learning but against learning of all kinds thanks to the inspiration of Gregory the Great, Ireland pursued its learned way unhindered by, and unheeding of, papal rebuke. The Roman Church in England, closely in touch with the papal court, naturally took offence at Irish independence and Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus and his colleagues and successors did everything in their power to prevent Englishmen from crossing the Irish sea to further their education.

This dislike of Irish culture was based in part on religious prejudice. By the extreme Romanising party the Irish Christians were looked upon, for no very vital reason, as heretics. The Irish celebrated Easter at a different date to the Romans; they practised a different kind of tonsure and doubt was cast on the validity of their episcopal consecrations. This latter could in practice become a very insulting doubt, as English Bishops refused to have anything to do with their Irish brethren—some would not even sleep under the same roof or eat in the same house. The major points at issue were settled in favour of the Roman party at the Synod of Whitby in 664; at which time all of

²⁶ Phillips : ,op. cit , Vol. I, p. 217.

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Southern Scotland and Northern England followed the Celtic usage; whilst the Roman usage only prevailed in Southern England—but it had behind it the great weight of continental opinion and the historical support of all the old ideals of the Roman Empire. During the years when the dispute was at its bitterest some diminution in the numbers of Englishmen coming to Ireland for an education was inevitable, but those from the continent continued to come in ever-increasing numbers. Amongst the most distinguished of the foreigners to be educated in Ireland were Oswald II, who died in 642; and Aelfrid who died in 704, both Kings of Northumbria; and Dagobert II, who died in 679 as King of France. Aelfrid of Northumbria was a scholar of distinction who could both speak and write the Irish language. One of his successors, Ceolwulf, was also educated in Ireland.

Men were not the only students of these schools. The Brehon Law had provided, to a certain extent, for the education of women, and under the Christian dispensation there was no retrogression. St. Brigid in her monastery at Kildare apparently kept a school for young ladies, and there can be no doubt that nuns kept schools for very young children. Thus the education of St. Brendan of Clonfert was commenced under St. Ita. It is a legitimate conclusion that if women were engaged in teaching others they had themselves been taught, but the time was not yet when any but a very rare woman would cross the seas to come to Irish schools, though Irish women saints in appreciable numbers went abroad to help to educate the heathen.

Ireland's great educational reputation from the seventh century onwards was due to several causes. In the first place, for good or ill, Ireland had never been conquered by Rome and in consequence the fall of the Roman Empire left her in no worse position than that in which she had been before. Secondly, her very independence of the Roman system gave her a strength and a power of initiative lacking in those lands which Rome had dominated for centuries. Then

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too, Ireland was an island distant from the danger spots on the continent, and in the fifth and later centuries the danger spots were situated anywhere that the invading hosts of Goths, Vandals, Huns, and Alans could reach. Ireland was therefore fortunate in that she could take the part of onlooker at the trials and discomforts of the western world. Of course from another point of view this independence from Rome had a number of disadvantages. As a national unit Ireland had not been completely forged. In the thirteenth century when other countries were beginning to unify themselves behind national boundaries, bearing in mind the unifying influence of imperial Rome, the petty Irish Kingdoms were in such a state of squabbling discontent that a foreign monarch felt justified in invoking the Papal blessing on an attempt to keep the peace and control the warring tribes. It is most difficult to draw up an account of the profit and loss upon this subject, but the fact remains that for better or worse Ireland, more by good luck than good management, remained outside the centralising influence of Roman imperialism.

When the continuous waves of invading barbarians were successively received into the Christian Church, the effect of the new admixture was bound to have a profound influence upon that body. The new converts were illiterate men with no sort of cultural tradition, and their obscurantist influence was quickly felt in the Church. Not that there hadn't been a long struggle even before the time of the barbarian invasions regarding the usefulness or otherwise of non-scriptural knowledge. In the main the Eastern fathers were scholarly men who advocated education and culture as necessary component parts of the Kingdom of God; and in the main the Latin fathers had held that all pagan knowledge was a snare and a delusion. Nevertheless till these new converts came to their aid the Western Church had merely shown a passive attitude towards the spread of learning and culture.

Justification for the new attitude must be sought

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in the very real sense of the brevity of human life felt by the Latin fathers. Men living daily face to face with eternity are apt to consider nothing but that which they construe to be of eternal value. It was a Mohammedan who destroyed the great Library at Alexandria because he said "Whatever is worth having in the Library is to be found in the Koran ; whatever is bad ought unquestionably to be destroyed," but the sentiment could as easily have been given utterance to by any of the continental Christian leaders , whilst in fact it was the very opposite of the general attitude adopted by the cultured Moslems of the day. The battle of Tours in 732 saved Europe for Christianity, but it can reasonably be argued that it lost Europe for civilisation.

In many matters the Moors could have proved themselves the teachers of the Christians. Toleration was one of the greatest of the Moorish virtues, and in some parts of the Christian world it has not even yet been achieved. Cleanliness is another, and nothing is more heart-rending to contemplate than the Christian destruction of the magnificent Moorish baths of Southern Spain by the armies of a Queen of whom it could be boasted that only three times in her life was she bathed—once when she was born, once, the night before she was married, and once when she was a corpse ! The contrast between Isabella of Castile and the poorest Moor who was required by his religion to bathe twice a day, does not seem the contrast between civilisation and barbarism.

All these things passed Ireland by. She was not even greatly affected by the commands and decrees of the papal court at Rome. A proper respect she naturally paid to the senior Bishop of Western Europe, but he was too far off to interfere and the Irish Church went its own peculiar way unhindered. Classical studies proceeded uninterrupted in the monastic schools, until at last a time came when it could be said that Ireland was the only place in Western Europe where

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the Greek language was known, studied, and understood.

Some conception of the all-pervading ignorance of the continent can be gained by the realisation that Charlemagne, the illustrious founder of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, that elusive fantasy which wanders with peculiar unimportance in and out of our history books, could neither read nor write albeit he was to prove the greatest reviver of continental learning and culture. The principal spur which brought him to his historic position as patron of learning was the discovery that the majority of the clergy having cure of souls in his realm could not write, while some even were quite unable to read and were compelled to mumble the services by heart. From the day of that discovery to the day of his death the greater part of his best energies was spent in efforts to eradicate this state of affairs, and in this he received his major support from the graduates of the great Irish monastic schools. Once the Emperor had thrown his influence on the side of learning there was an immediate rush from "the island of Saints and Scholars" by all who hoped to benefit from imperial patronage.

Nor was the Emperor slow to recognise the contribution that his Irish friends could and did make to the education of his subjects. It became well nigh impossible to secure high position at the court had one not been educated in Ireland. Alcuin, the first Master of the Palace School, although an Englishman by birth, had been in contact with all that was best in Irish culture, and his principal coadjutor in French education—John Scotus Erigena—was Irish in every respect. It is said that Irish scholars literally came in hundreds to the Court of Charlemagne, so hearty was the welcome accorded to them. As the ninth century progressed and Ireland began to suffer for the first time for many years from the assaults of foreigners Irish scholars in increasing numbers crossed the seas to find a cultural home in France. Heiric of Auxerre, writing about in the year 876, asserted "Ireland

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despising the danger of the seas, is migrating almost *en masse* with her crowd of philosophers to our shores and all the most learned doom themselves to voluntary exile to attend the bidding of Solomon the Wise."²⁷ Two conclusions can be drawn from this quotation. Firstly that the successors of Charlemagne showed the same interest in education as did their illustrious ancestor, and secondly, that this migration can be taken as in some respects repaying the debt owed to the exiled Gaulish scholars who had been driven before previous hordes of barbarians and who had probably brought classical learning to Ireland. When one considers the tremendous impact, which the continent had to suffer anew in the ninth century, it must be realised that had it not been for the influence of Charlemagne all education and culture would have been completely obliterated on the European mainland. As it was, even after the great work of the Irish, it only survived in the most out-of-the-way places.

The responsibility for the hordes of Irishmen who made France the field for their cultural labours can be laid with certainty on the shoulders of John Scotus Erigena. Born somewhere between the years 800-815, he was easily the most famous of the successors of Alcuin in the Palace School. Prior to this time the tendency as fostered by Charlemagne was for Frenchmen to go to Ireland for their education at the schools which in his edicts he had specially praised, and many were the Frenchmen who made the journey, but with the establishment of John Scotus Erigena in Tours that monastery became the centre of Irish learning throughout Europe, and its master became world-famous first as the leader of what was then known as the Irish School of Philosophy; and later as the man who is given the credit for having founded the system of disputation later elaborated as scholastic philosophy. The "Irish School," as it was called, had been a conspicuous feature at the Frankish Court ever since the days of Alcuin to whom it was generally in opposition. Alcuin,

²⁷ *Cambridge Med. History*, Vol. III, Ch. XX, p. 524

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though educated in the North of England, had a tendency to adopt that ultramontane attitude in religious affairs which was quite unknown to the Irish. The "Irish School" represented a more philosophic form of Christianity in its willingness to discuss, and its lack of undue trammelling by high ecclesiastical authority.

This philosophic and questioning attitude undoubtedly found its ablest exponent in John Scotus Erigena. Educated at Armagh, he came to France in 845 on the invitation of Charles the Bald, and he quickly showed himself a scholar of the highest rank. Like his father Lewis the Pious, Charles tended from the philosophic and religious point of view more towards the Irish school than towards the point of view expressed by Alcuin and the more devoted adherents of a Papal attitude. John Scotus was about thirty years of age when he came to France, and the first task he undertook was the translation of a Greek manuscript entitled the "Hierarchies" by a certain Dionysius who in those days was often confused with St. Denis the patron saint of France. Of this translation Anastasius, the Papal Librarian, wrote, "It is astonishing how this barbarian, living on the confines of the world, who might reasonably have been presumed to be as ignorant of Greek as he was remote from intercourse with civilised men, could have been able intellectually to grasp such mysteries and to render them into another language."²⁸ Such was the patronising opinion of a truly Roman-minded ecclesiastic.

John Scotus, to all intents and purposes, introduced on a serious scale the study of the Greek language into the Palace School. He brought to his teaching a wider knowledge of ancient learning than any of his predecessors, and especially was he at home in the Greek fathers who in the Frankish dominions were practically unknown, although Charlemagne in order to foster relationships with the Eastern Empire had attempted to establish two Greek scholars in his realm. As well,

28 Mullinger: *The Schools of Charles the Great*, p. 177.

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John Scotus introduced pagan and secular texts into the monasteries, and falling under the suspicion of heresy, he did more than he probably intended towards the spread of controversial dialectical argument. In this he had the disposition both to underrate, and to be contemptuous of his opponent, invariably pleading as authority some Greek father or pagan author, of whom his adversary had probably never heard. As a result he set in motion that great philosophic conflict between nominalism and realism, which occupied the learned world so exclusively in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

John Scotus has been chosen as the outstanding example of Irish teaching on the continent, in the ninth century, but it must be remembered that he was but one, albeit the most outstanding one, amongst a host of others. All the great Irish missionaries, Columbanus, Aidan, Gall Swithbert, and the rest carried with them not merely a missionary zeal but also a profound love of learning, and through the dark ages through which Europe was to pass in the tenth and eleventh centuries, their monasteries preserved a large portion of the written treasures of the world of to-day. It has been computed that at least one hundred and twenty-two monasteries in Britain and on the continent were founded by Irish missionaries and were to some extent Irish in their constitution²⁹. The last of these, that of St. James, at Ratisbon, was not closed until 1860. All of these monasteries did something to spread Irish culture in the most out-of-the-way places and all of them exercised some little effect on ecclesiastical conditions in their neighbourhoods.³⁰ Ninth and tenth century Irish monks were famous for their copying work. It must be remembered that they came from the land of the *Book of Kells*, that great masterpiece of Celtic art, and they did a great deal to preserve many manuscripts which otherwise might have been lost.

²⁹ Graham : op. cit., p. 41.

³⁰ Zimmer : *The Irish Element in Mediaeval Culture*.

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Realisation of the significant contribution made to European culture by Irish educated monks brings us to the question of the curriculum. We have emphasised the importance attached by contemporaries to the remarkable knowledge of Greek existent in the Irish schools. This knowledge of Greek was not uncommon in Ireland as early as the sixth century, for many Greek apocryphal and legendary stories unknown to western Europe are to be found in Irish writings of that time,³¹ and Mr. Meissner asserts of the seventh and eighth centuries that "wherever Greek passages are to be found in Latin works they are to be referred to Irish influence."³² It is possible that the Greek language was brought to Ireland via Marseilles, which in the early centuries of the Christian era was a great centre of Greek influence in the western Mediterranean, and which is known to have had a close commercial connection with Ireland. Certain features of Irish ecclesiastical government lend support to the belief that in the early days of Irish Christianity a close connection with some Greek influence must have existed.

Irish scholars were the authors of two of the most valuable works given to the world during the dark ages. St. Adamnan wrote his "Tract on the Holy Places," and his "Life of St. Columba," whilst a man of a strikingly similar name, Adananus, who was perhaps Great Abbot of Iona, has left us "Notes on the Bucolics and Georgics of Virgil." The latter "witnesses," says Dr. James, "to these facts: that the scientific study of *grammar*, as the Romans understood it, was carried on by the Irish at a time when it was dead in continental Europe and that complete texts of ancient commentaries on Virgil had found their way into the hands of an Irishman." Thus Latin and Greek grammar and literature were strongly in evidence in the curriculum, and to these must naturally be added the primary study—the Holy Scriptures. Uniformly the Psalms were learnt by heart by all students, though this task

31 *Cambridge Mediæval History* : Vol. III, Chap. XIX, p. 506.

32 Phillips . op cit., Vol. I, p. 215.

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was made the more easy by the frequent and regular services at which a certain number were chanted or sung. As the Monastic Schools served primarily ecclesiastical functions the curriculum did not include much of a mathematical or scientific nature; nevertheless in the persons of Dicuil the geographer and Vergil the Geometer, Ireland produced the two outstanding non-classical scholars of the dark ages. Vergil, who although Bishop of Salzburg, was by birth an O'Farrell from County Longford, was the foremost mathematician of his day. More than five centuries before Copernicus he taught that the world was round, and his belief in the existence of the antipodes was condemned by the Papacy as heretical. So lacking in comprehension of his theories were the Papal theologians, that his condemnation was based on the contention that he taught the existence of a world within a world. Dicuil, who completed his work "*Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae*" in the year 825 showed a remarkable knowledge of the geography of the world of his day, particularly is this so when his book is contrasted with those of his immediate predecessors in the same subject. He quotes extensively from authors pagan and Christian, but in the main he bases his results on extracts from Julius Caesar, and on the ancient geographical works of Pliny and Solinus. He includes most accurate details regarding the dimensions of the Pyramids, as well as a very detailed account of the geography of Iceland. This latter is the more remarkable as it is not till quite a number of years later, in 874, to be precise, that that island was discovered and colonised by the Danes who found on their arrival that "*Irish Books, Bells, and Croziers*" had been left behind by the previous inhabitants.³³ Dicuil also discusses at some length the canal which had been cut between the Nile and Suez about the fifth century B.C., and which was later used by de Lesseps as one of the feeders of the modern Suez canal. All things considered, these two authors show that other besides

³³ Stokes: *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, pp. 214-224.

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purely classical and religious subjects were included in the Irish Monastic Schools.

There was yet another branch of culture at which the Irish schools excelled. As must be remembered, before the invention of printing all books had to be copied by hand. And who does not recall the dictum of the Irish King when appeal was made against St. Columba for having copied a manuscript without the permission of the owner, from whom he had borrowed it—"as to every cow belongs its own calf, so to every book belongs its own copy." St. Columba did not accept this decision in any very Christian manner, but fortunately the decision was not one generally acted upon in Irish monastic circles. The Irish were the outstanding copyists not only of those ages but of all time. One has only to look at the *Book of Kells* to realise the marvellous beauty of the work that could be accomplished, as yet no mechanical contrivance has produced anything nearly as fine; and the *Book of Kells* is no isolated volume, the *Book of Durrow* and many another approach it in artistic excellence. These copyists showed not merely their artistic ability but also their intellectual acquirements in the course of their pursuit. Thus, in the *Book of Armagh*, although the Lord's Prayer is written in the Latin Language, it is inscribed in Greek characters. We have already mentioned how valuable the continental Irish monasteries were in preserving books and manuscripts which otherwise would unquestionably have been lost during the dark ages. In this they followed the inspiration of that great apostle of the continent, Columbanus, a man amazingly well-read in both Christian and pagan authors. The apostle of Burgundy, Switzerland, and Northern Italy, he wrote excellent Latin verse, and allusions to pagan and Christian antiquity abound in his poems.³⁴ He left to the Irish monks who came after him a great cultural tradition which they did everything in their power to preserve.

The most important of the manuscript libraries

³⁴ Stokes. op

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collected by Irish monks were those at St. Gall in Switzerland and at Bobbio in Italy. A catalogue of the Bobbio manuscripts attributed to Abbot Gerbert who afterwards became Pope Sylvester II contains the names of over seven hundred volumes, many of which are still preserved in Rome, Turin, and Milan. Some of these that remain seem to have been in the possession of the famous Irish scholar Dungal, who accompanied Charlemagne's grandson Lothaire on his journey to Italy for the latter's coronation as King of Lombardy in 821. Dungal opened a school at Pavia; and in a short time it had become well-nigh as famous as Charlemagne's Palace School at Tours. Students flocked to the city from every quarter and it acquired that reputation as a cultural centre which was ultimately to make it the site of a famous university. Thus Ireland can claim some share in the foundation of one of Italy's greatest universities. Dungal spent his declining years in the monastery of Bobbio where he showed the customary ability of an Irishman to partake in theological controversy. His adversary was an old friend, Claudio, Bishop of Turin, who had accompanied him to Italy with Lothaire. Claudio, who on one occasion had the temerity to describe a council of Italian Bishops as a "council of asses," was very critical of the veneration of images and Dungal took up what was to become the historic attitude of the Roman Church to a problem which was ultimately to divide Christendom ³⁵

There is one aspect of culture in which this period excelled, and which must not be overlooked. Music was an important element in Irish education both in the Bardic and Monastic Schools, and the love of music was carried by Irish monks to their continental monasteries. The playing of the harp as an accompaniment to the voice was common in Ireland as early as the fifth or sixth century, and the monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland was already famous for its

³⁵ Lanigan: *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, Vol. III, Chap. XX.

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music school when its founder died in 645. Many modifications of the Gregorian chant were made under the influence of Irish melodies, and it has even been claimed that Irish musicians were the first to use harmony and counterpoint in their songs ³⁶

Unfortunately no exact information has been handed down to us regarding the methods of teaching in the monastic schools, and in general our knowledge of the curriculum has been drawn from the known acquirements of the graduates who may, perchance, though it is very unlikely, such is their number, have been peculiar and outstanding pupils. In the earliest monastic records no particular teacher is mentioned as being on the staff, but after the eighth century the Abbot came to have his duties restricted to those of the religious head of the community and a new official, the *Scholasticus*, appears, a man whose qualifications seem very similar to those of the *Drumchú*, or master of all learning. That they had some idea of learning without tears is evidenced by the fact that St. Columba's first alphabet is said to have been written or impressed on a cake, which he ate after learning it.

The tenth and eleventh centuries were from the monastic point of view periods of stagnation and decay. The marauding attacks of the Danes and Northmen, who were no respecters of churches or persons scattered abroad the monastic treasures, drove away the foreign pupils, and often destroyed the schools and murdered the monks. It is from this period that the Round Towers as refuges for inhabitants and for treasures of the monasteries are presumed to date. Education and culture naturally could not be killed overnight. Those Irish kings who aspired to the position of *Ard-Rí* were in general zealous supporters of the Church and with it of the monastic schools. Thus Brian Boróimhe was buried before the high altar at Armagh in virtue of his great gifts to the See of Patrick, although he himself came from Limerick.

In the twelfth century a reform movement in the

36 Flood: *History of Irish Music*, pp. 19-20.

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Irish Church arose on the inspiration of St. Malachy. The only one of the great Irish schools to have survived the years of terror with any degree of success was Armagh. Bangor, Clonard, Clonmacnoise, Monasterboice, and the rest had all been crushed and their scholars dispersed, but the historic associationship of Armagh with St. Patrick had preserved that famous school and it was to it that St. Malachy expected his reformed church to look for its priests. In 1162 at the Synod of Clane it was decreed, on the proposition of the Primate Gelasius, that no one should teach or preach throughout Ireland who was not an alumnus of Armagh. Unfortunately this was a mere decade before the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland when the Reformation of the Irish Church was to be taken into other hands. One of the final acts of the last *Ard-Rí* was to increase the salary of the master at Armagh in 1169, but history does not record for how long he retained this increase.

The Anglo-Normans, although as conquerors they were anti-Irish, were not in any sense anti-religious. In fact Henry II had received authority from several popes to undertake the religious reformation and temporal domination of the Irish people. Accordingly the monasteries were at first in no wise disturbed, though there was an obvious lessening in the number of Irishmen who attained episcopal rank—Henry and his successors had too many Norman churchmen to reward for that. As the Norman occupation continued a breach was effected between the religious establishments within the boundaries of the Pale and those within the territory of the Irish enemy. Those inside the Pale began to include English in their curriculum instead of Irish, while those outside the Pale continued Irish speaking as before. As we all know, the extent of the Pale—that is, of the area under the direct rule of the English—varied according to the interests of the King and the ability of his deputies. Though from the time when the Wars of the Roses began there was a steady and continuous diminution in the Anglicised

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area in Ireland, and the great majority of the Anglo-Norman Barons who were the original conquerors of Ireland, gradually became as Irish-speaking as those by whom they were surrounded. Thus in the Dublin Parliament of 1541, all the Peers except MacGillapatrik were of Norman or English descent, and yet not one except the Earl of Ormonde could understand English.³⁷

With the conversion of Henry VIII to the cause of the Reformation, the monasteries came immediately under the despoiling hand of his representatives and servants. As in England, first the smaller monasteries and then the greater were dissolved—despite the fact that the Deputy, Lord Leonard Gray, in 1539 besought Henry's favour for certain monasteries of the Pale on the ground that they instructed youth in "virtue, learning, and in the English tongue and behaviour."³⁸ His appeal fell on deaf and greedy ears, though a few monastic and convent schools did remain open till after that era, and the education of the Irish people was left in the discretionary power of almost illiterate parliaments. To a certain extent the spirit of the monastic schools was carried over to the continent of Europe, where already before the end of the sixteenth century centres for the religious and secular education of the Irish youth who still retained their affection for the Roman See, were established in several countries. The principal of these great Irish schools on the continent were Salamanca, founded in 1582; Lisbon, 1595; Douai, 1596; Antwerp, 1600; Prague, 1601; Toulouse, 1660; Paris, 1677, and the earliest of the foundations at Rome established in 1625.³⁹ Throughout the period of the penal laws these schools continued to draw a never-failing body of students leaving Ireland for the defence of their faith. Continental monarchs used them as weapons to annoy and intimidate the English court. Those in France and Spain were under the special protection of the Roman Catholic sovereigns,

³⁷ Hyde: *op. cit.*, p. 610.

³⁸ Dowling: *op. cit.*, p. 11.

³⁹ *Ibid*: p. 15.

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King Philip II of Spain even granting financial aid to any Irishman returning as a priest to serve in his native land. During all the years of Stuart exile they were naturally at all times active hotbeds of Jacobite intrigue—after all, the Stuarts were not merely Roman Catholic, they were also descendants of the old Irish Kings of Dal Riada.

These schools in general provided an education only for the religious life, but in several secular students were admitted, usually, as in Salamanca, on the payment of higher fees. Subsequent to the relaxation of the penal laws after 1782, the majority of these schools ceased to exist, a further percentage were dissolved during the French Revolution, and the remainder which survive down to the present day are now wholly given over to preparation for the priesthood. They are nevertheless the lineal inheritors of the old spirit of the monastic schools, which also in the main prepared students for Holy Orders. To a certain extent it is regretted by some that the same percentage as formerly of Irish Roman Catholic priesthood are not educated abroad, as residence in such cities as Paris, Salamanca and Rome brought students into contact with a world of thought and experience which cannot but have exercised a broadening influence.

Some slight attempt was made by individual teachers such as Father Peter White, formerly Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, at Kilkenny, to continue the education of Roman Catholic youth in the tenets of their faith; but no such possibility was permitted, and as far as Ireland was concerned the monastic tradition was lost. It had been a great tradition, but the monastic school had tended far too much in its later years to live on the glories of its past history. The Anglo-Norman conquest is almost always blamed for the decline in Irish learning, but it is now generally agreed by scholars that after the tenth century Ireland made no cultural advance of any considerable kind, and all that can be said is that when Ireland showed some disposition to awake from her lethargy in the middle of the twelfth

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century she was faced for the first time with the conditions of the Anglo-Norman invasion. However, it can never be forgotten that for a brief period during the ninth and tenth centuries, Ireland's monastic schools acted as the Universities of the world, and preserved for European culture, artistic and literary work which otherwise would unquestionably have been lost. The whole of Europe owes a deep debt of gratitude to the painstaking labours of these ancient Irish schools and scholars.

Recommended for further reading :

Graham, H : *The Early Irish Monastic Schools*. Dublin 1923

Healy, J. : *Ireland's Ancient Schools and Scholars*. Dublin, 1890.

O'Boyle, J. : *The Irish Colleges on the Continent* Dublin, 1935

Zimmer, Heinrich : *The Irish Element in Mediæval Culture*. New York and London, 1891.

The Cambridge Mediæval History. Vol III, Chaps. XIX, XX

Mullinger : *Schools of Charles the Great*. London, 1877.
(Contains chapters on the Irish scholars on the continent.)

CHAPTER III

THE POLICY OF ANGLICISATION IN IRELAND

IN 1537 Henry VIII ordered the Dissolution of the Irish monasteries, and Ireland was left, for the time being at any rate, without any school or education system whatsoever. It seems strange to us that such a serious breach with the past could take place, as it were, overnight, without any attempt having been made to foresee the inevitable consequences. But although the Henrican Reformation took place with startling suddenness, the situation in the monastic houses had been steadily deteriorating for several centuries. In fact a great proportion of the old Irish native houses had ceased to exist, and their place had been taken by the recently formed Continental religious orders such as the Cistercians and the Dominicans. All alike had shared in the general relaxation of religious discipline and conventual practice which was the real cause of the continental reformation. But although the real necessity for reform was admitted even by the Roman Church itself in the Council of Trent, the Reformation was more an aspect of the spirit of the times than a real expression of religious zeal.

Mediæval Europe was permeated with the great ideal of the single Christian world Empire with the Pope wielding the spiritual and the Emperor the secular sword. The Babylonian captivity and the continued depravity of the Roman court took from it the most effective part of its spiritual weapons, and the general unrest following on the Renaissance and the discovery of America led men to examine with thoroughness into the foundations of all belief. As far as England was concerned, the Reformation could point to a distinguished ancestry. England, the "Milch Cow" of

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the Papacy under Henry III, and a Papal vassal state under John had oftentimes shown herself in a very different light. When Edward I refused the protection of the law to clerics who obeyed the command of Pope Boniface VIII that they should pay no taxes to the civil power, the Pope was forced quietly to acquiesce. In Grossteste, Bishop of Lincoln; in Wycliff and his Lollards; in John Ball, who preached "when Adam delyved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?" ; England had produced leaders and parties who at all times looked askance at the centralised domination of the church at Rome. Not so Ireland; and for the latter's devotion to the Holy See, England was largely responsible. The Anglo-Norman invasion had been urged by several pontiffs in order that the somewhat erratic Irish church should be conformed to the Roman pattern. One of Henry II's first tasks when he came to Ireland was to summon a synod of the Irish bishops in order that the reforms suggested by Rome should be put into operation. In this he was carrying on the work of St Malachy, the great Archbishop of Armagh in the middle of the twelfth century, who had himself journeyed to Rome in order that the pallium might be obtained for the Irish Primate. In the years between 1172 and 1537 Ireland had been drawn closer and closer to the Roman allegiance in a way she had never experienced before. As a result, when the Reformation came, and was associated with the political policy of the conquering race, it was rejected ultimately by a great majority of the Irish people. Nor was its association with the conqueror the only cause of this rejection. In another place we will point out the significance of the absence from the country of any means of higher education as provided in the English Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. In this matter it meant that the educational ferment which preceded and accompanied the Reformation period passed Ireland by, and she was completely unfitted either to receive the new doctrines boldly, or to criticise them on any intellectual basis.

It was the intention of those advisers of Henry VIII

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who drafted the legislation regarding the suppression of the monasteries that a considerable share of their revenues should be diverted to educational purposes. But they reckoned not on the greed of the Henrican nobility and civil service, nor on the cupidity that must inevitably be aroused as each with jealous eyes watched his neighbour receiving fair tracts of church lands. Many a Reformation supporter was won over by a very material motive, and though Mary I might put the clock back as far as Church services were concerned, she could never persuade her pious servants to regurgitate the church lands they had swallowed. The result in Ireland was that the Act of 1537 directing the erection of parish schools was to a large extent a dead letter. Nevertheless the Act—28 Henry VIII, c. 15—is of importance as laying down what was to be the educational policy for all Irish government schools down to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. One of the most important provisions was that all the inhabitants of Ireland and their children must speak English,⁴⁰ and for two hundred and fifty years it was the dual purpose of education in Ireland to turn out English-speaking and Protestant children. As well as obtaining grants of church lands these schools were to be supported by the old device of a tax on beneficed clergy, as in the years prior to the Reformation. But in the change from the old order to the new, many parishes were left without rectors or curates, and there was inevitably a good deal of disorder, some clergy conforming, some pretending to conform, and others refusing to give up their tenure of their ecclesiastical benefices although out of sympathy with the government's church policy. All things considered, it is not to be wondered at that the first education Act under the Reformed dispensation was a dismal failure.

For a time it seemed as if the Reformed movement was going to carry the day in Ireland. Such a large proportion of the clergy conformed to the state organisation that those who preferred the old service were

40 Corcoran : *State Policy in Irish Education*, pp. 42-43.

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left without pastors. Had such a state of affairs continued for any length of time, the religious problem might have appeared to have been settled, but such was not to be the case. Having recovered from the first shock of the Reformation, the Church of Rome had embarked upon a vigorous Counter-Reformation, and to that end had enlisted the members of the Society of Jesus to lead the attack on those citadels which had succumbed to the reformers' logic. Midway through the reign of Elizabeth the Jesuits arrived in Ireland, and by working on the traditional antagonism of the Irish to the English conqueror and the English-controlled government from Dublin Castle, had quickly gained a hearing, especially with those who detested the spreading influence of the English tongue. Jesuit schools are known to have arisen in this period in New Ross, Kilkenny, Dublin, Cashel, and Drogheda—all in or near the Pale. The Franciscans were in closer touch with the native Irish. The Jesuits were even working an "inchoate university" in Dublin at the end of the century to confront the Elizabethan University which had just been founded.⁴¹ As late as 1615 a Roman Catholic School, kept by a very learned scholar named Lynch, still existed in Galway, but in that year it was suppressed as the master would not conform,⁴² and thereafter the native Irish of Roman Catholic faith were compelled to seek an education, if of the peasant class, at the Hedge School; if of a wealthier class, at one of the Irish Colleges abroad. In Limerick the last record of a Roman Catholic School is of that visited by Robert Payne in 1590. In it one hundred and sixty pupils could talk English through construing it from Latin.⁴³

Queen Elizabeth and her successor James I took active steps to see that these Jesuit and Roman Catholic schools were completely suppressed, for reasons which were not primarily religious. The Roman Pontiff had presumed to call Elizabeth a bastard, and had released

⁴¹ *Ibid* : pp 23-24.

⁴² *Ibid.* : p. 23.

⁴³ Corcoran. op cit., . p. 33.

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her subjects from all obedience to her. Anyone who accepted the Papal ruling became immediately a rebel and was treated accordingly. The modern solution of taking one's religion and not one's politics from Rome had not been thought of. Consequently the Roman Catholic faith was looked upon by Elizabeth's advisers as a purely political problem, and as such it was treated. To Burghley and his Council, the Jesuits were the deadliest of enemies. They were generally supposed to have recommended the deposition Bull to the Pope; they unquestionably, whether or no "*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*," spread disloyalty and disaffection throughout Her Majesty's Realms of England and Ireland, and so they were hunted, not as heretical or anti-religious, but as traitors and felons carrying on treasonable relationships to the detriment of the country's peace. As a result of the Pope's untoward action, the Counter-Reformation gained no success in England, but it was otherwise in Ireland, and by the end of Elizabeth's reign it could be seen that the Reformation of the Irish people was as yet, from the Protestant point of view, unachieved, although the Queen herself had realised that if it was ever to be a success some concession to Irish sentiment must be made, and to that end had recommended the rendering of parts of the Reformed Service into the Irish tongue. The prelates who ruled in Ireland took so little interest in the step that it was doomed to failure almost from the start.

Elizabeth realised full well the necessity of educating a native clergy if the church was to be anything but an alien institution, and to that end not only did she establish the University at Dublin, but also by the Act 12 Elizabeth c. I, called "*An Act for the Erection of Free Schools*," she laid down the principle "that there shall be from henceforth a free schoole within every diocese of this realm of Ireland, and that the schoolmaster shall be an Englishman or of the English birth in this realm." The nomination to the mastership in these schools was to lie in the hands of the Lord

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Deputy except in the case of those in the dioceses of Armagh, Dublin, Meath and Kildare, where the local Archbishop or Bishop was to have the right of presentation. As in the case of the Parish Schools decreed by Henry VIII, the salaries were to be paid out of a tax levied on the diocesan clergy.⁴⁴ Once again the Act proved a sorry failure, and little or no attempt was made to put it into execution. For this many things were responsible. Although the Elizabethan government may have realised what in the ultimate would have been the best for Ireland, it was always so hard pressed for money that it had generally to be satisfied with a second-best expedient. In consequence, the English government could never bring itself to spend the sums of money, colossal for those days, which would have been necessary to bring all of Ireland under English law. Far better would it have been to have made no such attempt, than to have left a legacy of half-done work to their successors. With the possible exception of the Protestant school at Kilkenny, no Irish school can trace a continuous history back to the days of Queen Elizabeth.

That the Dublin government realised the weakness of their educational programme is evidenced in a draft which has come down to us, written probably by Lord Deputy Sir Henry Sidney. In order that a proper settlement of Ireland should be achieved, he advocates that—God's will must first be duly planted and all idolatry extirpated, then a Parliament should be summoned which would proceed to pass legislation arranging amongst other things that: (1) Two universities should be established at Limerick and Armagh; (2) all Brehons, Bards, Rhymers, Friars, Monks, Jesuits, Pardoners, Nuns should be executed by martial law, (3) Irish habits for men and women were to be abolished and the English tongue to be extended.⁴⁵ These were three fairly comprehensive measures amongst a host of other suggestions, and it was undoubtedly

⁴⁴ Corcoran: *op cit*, p. 47.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*: pp. 50-51.

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due to the parsimony with which the Irish Deputies were treated that no such legislation was seriously enacted and obeyed during the Elizabethan period.

James I seems to have had a far more thorough grasp of the Irish problem than his predecessor, and his is the only solution which in the light of history can, from the English point of view, be looked on as a success. The Plantation of Ulster, carried out by his orders in the years after 1608, replaced the old Gaelic occupiers of Northern Ireland with large numbers of his native-born Scots, who soon established for themselves a civilisation of their own quite distinct from that of the Gaels whom they supplanted. The flight of the Earls provided the English government with one of the few occasions which was turned to the best advantage. The blood and religion of the Scotch settlers still dominate Northern Ireland.

James was not slow to recognise that if his plantation policy was to succeed, not merely must Protestant planters be provided, but means and opportunities must be at hand to preserve a Protestant race, else, as had happened so often before, the new-comers would be quickly swallowed up amongst their preponderantly Roman Catholic neighbours, and would inevitably become "more Irish than the Irish themselves." The decree of his Privy Council in 1608, "that there shall be one free school, at least, appointed in every county, for the education of youths in learning and religion," showed his appreciation of this point, and ultimately established what are now called the Royal Schools on their present basis. Although these schools were not, as directed, established in every county, nevertheless in the long run at least six of them came into being, which is six more than the ponderous Elizabethan legislation had created. The schools were to be supported by grants of land allocated to them in each county. Thus in Armagh 700 acres were set aside near Mountnorris, on the main road between Armagh and Newry, for the support of the master, who in this county was to be appointed by the Arch-

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bishop, though in general the Lord Lieutenant or the Lord Deputy held the patronage. James, by continuous pressure, ensured that some real attempt should be made to obey his legislation, and on the 21st July, 1609, he issued a commission to the Lord Deputy and others instructing them, *inter alia*, "that the parcels of land allotted to the free schools in the several counties should be set out by mears and bounds to the end that they may be passed as grants from the crown." But the procrastinating Irish authorities still seem to have done very little, and as yet there is no official record of the appointment of a headmaster to any of these schools.

On the 13th January, 1612, James decided on a further move, and empowered the Archbishops and Bishops in the several dioceses where schools had been set up, not only to nominate the respective masters, but also to grant leases of the endowment lands up to twenty-one years. On the 21st April, 1614, this decree was further elaborated to give the new Archbishop of Armagh, Christopher Hampton, who had succeeded Henry Ussher in the previous year, complete control over the endowment lands of all the new schools with ability to distribute them as he thought fit; as a result on the 6th August, 1618, it is recorded that "The Archbishop hath appointed certain schoolmasters for the several schools" for which he had been previously told to choose "the most apt places."

During the latter part of the reign of James I and the early part of that of Charles I, Charters were issued by the King to those schools which had been fully established. The issue of a charter did not always mean that the school had only just been founded. Usually it was granted in favour of some master or establishment already in existence. Thus, although the Charter of the Armagh Royal School was dated the 15th December, 1627, it is known that the first headmaster, John Lydiat, an Oxford scholar of repute, was at work and teaching there as early as 1608.⁴⁶

46 *Endowed Schools Ireland Commission*, 1858, pp 6, 7.

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Apparently even when these schools had been organised, they were not always utilised in a manner favoured by the government. The Lord Deputy, Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, wrote in 1633 to Archbishop Laud of Canterbury in the following terms: "The schools which might be a means to season the youth in virtue and religion, either ill provided, ill governed in the most part, or which is worse, applied sometimes underhand to the maintenance of Popish schoolmasters. Lands given to these charitable uses, and that in a bountiful proportion, especially by King James, of ever-blessed memory, dissipated, leased forth for little or nothing, concealed contrary to all conscience, and the excellent purpose of the founders."⁴⁷ What Strafford would have done to remedy such abuses we cannot tell. He was recalled too soon, only to be sacrificed by his Royal Master on Tower Hill. A few years more of his government, which from the commercial point of view was even more than favourable to the inhabitants of Ireland, and the whole course of Irish History might have been changed. But it was not to be, and the policy of "thorough" had to give way to that of "fumbling through."

These Royal schools had hardly settled down to work before Ireland was devastated by the terrible rebellion of 1642, during which the Armagh Headmaster, John Starkey, was with his family drowned by the rebels, when, it is recorded, he was above 100 years of age. Just before the rebellion broke out the Bishop of Derry had delivered a speech concerning them to the Irish House of Lords in its session of 1640. From that date until the Restoration no mention is made of these schools, and it is only too likely that in the troublous times after 1641, during part of which Oliver Cromwell was engaged on those Irish expeditions which created that most terrible of Irish maledictions, "The Curse of Cromwell on you," they were quite unable to function in any way at all. All centuries of Irish history subsequent to the Norman Conquest make

⁴⁷ *Endowed Schools Ireland Commission*, 1858, p. 10.

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somewhat unhappy reading, but in its own distinctive way no century is more terrible than the seventeenth. The Ulster Plantation, so disastrous to the Gaelic inhabitants, was followed by the Irish Rebellion, which was even more disastrous to the Protestant Planters ; and as if that were not enough, one of the most important battles in the European Balance of Power was fought out on Irish soil towards the end of the century. The Battle of the Boyne blasted the hopes of those Irish Roman Catholics who looked to their co-religionist James II to raise them from the inferior position they held in their native land, and yet this blow to their religious aspirations was received with enthusiasm at the Papal Court in Rome—for the temporal power of the Papacy often caused the Vatican secretariat to find itself involved in alliances and counter alliances in which faithful sons of the Church were to be found on either side. As far as Ireland was concerned the Battle of the Boyne created the Protestant Ascendancy which governed Ireland for the next century and a half. With the final annihilation of Roman Catholic hopes and with a continuous programme of repression, an apparent peace was created in Ireland, more like to stagnation than to anything else. In consequence the eighteenth century is one in which the thread of history is spun out unbroken and wherein no great chasm divides one period from another.

Immediately after the Restoration the Irish Parliament took up once again the subject of education at the Royal Schools. By an Act, 14 & 15 Charles II, c. 10, 1662, the sites of three of the Royal Schools were changed. That of Armagh was removed to that city from Mount-norris ; Mountjoy was moved to its present site in Dunganon ; and that of Donegal was removed to Raphoe. These Royal Schools, with those at Banagher, Cavan, Carysfort, and Enniskillen were of all Irish schools probably the most successful during the next period ; but, as is quite obvious, they served only a very limited area. Technically they were supposed by the terms of their charters to take in a considerable

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proportion of free pupils, but this they consistently failed to do until they came under strict government control in the nineteenth century. From our point of view these schools are of considerable importance as being the only establishments—with one possible exception—to maintain a continuous and useful existence for over three centuries. In the eighteenth century, when they were faced with the competition of diocesan and privately endowed schools, they for the most part maintained a superior position, chiefly because of their extensive endowments. Nevertheless the Report on Irish Education made by the Commissioners in 1791, which makes very sorry reading in all respects, is very critical of some of the Royal Schools. As will be reiterated later, Irish education had in the main fallen on evil days at the end of the eighteenth century. At times the Royal Schools were amongst the few schools where any teaching was taking place at all. But many even of their appointments had become complete sinecures, especially as the income from endowments was occasionally so large as to make fees from pupils a very trifling percentage of a master's salary. Thus one Master of Carysfort is recorded as never having seen his school, but he paid 10 pounds per year to a half-educated man to carry out his duties, while a Cavan schoolmaster held his appointment till well after he had passed his hundredth birthday, though for years he had been incapable of working. Armagh, thanks to the watchful eye of the Primate, was ever the outstanding exception to this deplorable state of affairs, and for the last half of the eighteenth century and during the early years of the nineteenth century was always looked on as the foremost Irish school.

The Royal Schools accounted, however, for but an infinitesimal proportion of the youth of the country. The Report of 1791 gives 211 as the total number being educated in all the Royal Schools in 1788. Of these 98 were boarders, 75 were day boys, and 38 were free pupils. The average fees paid in 1788 at these institutions is of some interest to us, especially when

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we regard what were known as "extras." They included French, writing, arithmetic and advanced mathematics. One is almost compelled to ask what then were they paying for? The rates were usually four guineas per annum for day boys and twenty-four guineas for boarders, but in the case of Armagh, boarders paid an entrance fee of five guineas and an annual fee of thirty-five guineas.

When the next Education Commission issued its Report, in 1835, the number of boys at the Royal Schools had risen only to 251, divided among the Royal Schools as follows :—

	Boarders	Dayboys	Free	Total	Salaries	
					Headmaster	Assistants
Armagh	10	20	6	36	400 l	2 at 75 l. per annum
Banagher	15	5	—	20	220 l	—
Cavan	13	15	—	28	400 l	—
Dungannon	58	26	7	91	500 l	{ 1 at 40 l 2 at 50 l
Enniskillen	14	36	9	60	350 l	{ 2 at 30 l 2 at 25 l
Raphoe	8	6	2	16	200 l	{ 1 at 100 l 2 at 50 l

The other Royal School, that of Carysfort, being really an elementary school, was not included in the table. At the time of the 1835 report these Royal Schools, and especially those of Armagh and Dungannon, still maintained their position as easily the best schools in the country, but their effect on the educational system was naturally slight. The staff usually consisted of a very brilliant headmaster, who had often been a Fellow of Trinity, who had resigned in order to get married, and one or two ill-paid and poorly educated masters who, in this way, might earn sufficient to get themselves University degrees. Each school bore very vividly the impress of the headmaster, and if he was keen and energetic the school was a success; of not, it was a complete failure.⁴⁸ As yet no school could live on its

⁴⁸ *Report of Select Committee on the Foundation Schools, Ireland, 1838, p. 54.*

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traditions alone. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries they educated a large proportion of the sons of the nobility and the gentry, but with the coming of easier methods of travelling those classes had a tendency to send their sons for education to England, and the Royal Schools, as the century progressed, became but little differentiated from the other secondary schools, all ultimately standardised under the various education Acts.

The original aim of these schools had been to educate pupils for the recent Elizabethan University of the Holy Trinity, and from the earliest days right well was this purpose achieved. The curriculum, therefore, emphasised entirely that classical education which was essential if one wished to enter a university. As the commercial importance of Ireland grew during the latter half of the eighteenth century many were the complaints of the one-sidedness of education in the Royal Schools. The phrase in the original charters describing them as "Free Schools" was drawn to the attention of the authorities, with the request that something should be done to ensure that a commercial as well as a classical education would be provided, but all these efforts proved fruitless and, of course, after the Act for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Irish Church in 1869 the provisions of the original charter were no longer binding.

After the victory for Protestantism under William III at the Battle of the Boyne, it was the main purpose of the English government in England and in Ireland to crush out entirely any slumbering elements of Roman Catholicism. The policy proved wholly successful in England, but it was far otherwise in Ireland, where the larger percentage of the inhabitants maintained a steadfast obedience to that Church and all that it connoted politically. Thousands of Ireland's bravest sons, rather than desert the faith and the causes for which they and their ancestors had suffered so much, took service under continental monarchs, still zealous in their attachment to the Roman faith. The remainder, at

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home, were placed under the severest disadvantages by successive Irish governments. The fear of Rome as a political system was so widespread and so sincere, that nothing but the realisation of its magnitude can justify in any way the severity of the Penal Code to which Irish Roman Catholics were subjected. One cannot but express the greatest admiration for their steadfastness in the face of great tribulation, and yet it must be remembered that the Irish Penal Code was modelled on that in operation in Roman Catholic France against the Huguenot party in that country, and even so, without the most severe measures of the latter code. The truth is that the Penal Codes were devised, not primarily for the persecution of religious bodies, but to achieve the national unity of each separate community. How else can we interpret the action of Catherine de Medici in recommending to Elizabeth of England another St. Bartholomew's Day—but this time of Roman Catholics rather than Protestants! Again it is quite obvious that the action of Cardinal Richelieu in withdrawing from the Huguenots privileges granted in the Edict of Nantes, was inspired by no purely religious motive, but rather was intended to serve the interests of the unity of France. The great difference between the severity of the French Penal Code and that of the Irish is that one was successful, and so appears to be justified before the bar of history, and the other was not.

The fact that in Ireland those who were of the Roman Catholic faith, no matter what their descent, usually adopted the Irish language and customs, whilst those who were Protestants adopted English ways, does unquestionably complicate the problem. From the earliest years after the Anglo-Norman Conquest there was a definite tendency on the part of the English settlers to adopt Irish ways. As early as 1367 it was found necessary, by the Statute of Kilkenny, to prohibit the use among the English of the Irish language and of the Irish mode of dress and riding; and we have already mentioned that such was the failure of this

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and subsequent legislation that it became well-nigh impossible for an Irish peer to be found who could not speak Irish more fluently than English, if he could speak the latter at all.

Such was the state of affairs when in the seventeenth century a comprehensive series of legislative Acts began to be enacted, which remained in force till the period of Grattan's parliament. Professor Corcoran of University College, Dublin, in his book *State Policy in Irish Education*, has summarised very succinctly the various measures of the Irish Penal Code which refer to education. He quotes the relevant portions of the Acts as follows :

- A. "Every schoolmaster keeping any publique or private school, and every person teaching youth in any house or family, shall subscribe the declaration . . . that I will conform to the Church of Ireland as it is now by law established . . . and later take the oath of allegiance and supremacie and shall not instruct any youth before license obtained from his Ordinarie."—(Act of Uniformity, 1665, 17 & 18 Car. II, c. 6.)
- B. "Many of the subjects of this Kingdom have accustomed themselves to send their children into Spain, France, and other foreign parts to be educated. If any at any time shall go or shall send any child into parts beyond the sea, to any popish university, college, school, or nunnery, or to be resident in any private popish family, every person so going or sending shall be disabled to prosecute any action or to be capable of any legacy or gift, and shall lose and forfeit all his, her, or their goods."—(Act to Restrain Foreign Education, 1695, 7 Wm. III, c. 4.)
- C. "Where any two justices of the peace suspect that any child has been sent into foreign parts they are required to convene any relation who had care of the child, to produce the child within two months, and if good proof is not given that the

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child is resident not beyond the seas, then such child shall incur all the penalties in the Act to Restrain Foreign Education"—(1703, 2 Anne, c. 6.)

- D. "Whatsoever person of the popish religion shall instruct youth in learning publicly or in a private house, shall be taken to be a popish regular clergyman, and incur all the penalties and forfeitures."—(1709, 8 Anne, c. 3.)
- E. "And that care may be taken for the education of children in the communion of the Church of Ireland as by law established, be it enacted . . . that no person of the popish religion shall or may be guardian to, or have the custody of, any orphan . . . under the age of 21 years ; but that the same . . . shall be disposed of by the High Court of Chancery to some near relation . . . being a Protestant and conforming himself, who is hereby required to use his utmost care to educate and bring up such child or minor in the Protestant religion . . . and if any person . . . being a papist . . . shall take . . . the guardianship or tuition of any orphan, he . . . shall forfeit the sum of five hundred pounds . . . the whole benefit of the said forfeitures to be, and is hereby, given to the Blue-coat Hospital in the City of Dublin."—(1709, 8 Anne, c. 3)

Quite obviously this penal code did everything it could to ensure that the Roman Catholic should find it impossible to obtain any education unless he was willing to forswear his religion and become a Protestant. By the first of the above-mentioned laws, that passed in the reign of Charles II, the teacher was compelled to swear that he would conform to the Church of Ireland as by law established, and the position of Roman Catholic schoolmasters was made even more impossible by the laws passed in the reign of Queen Anne. Elsewhere we have dealt with the successful attempts of the Roman Catholics to circumvent these laws in the Hedge Schools for the lower classes, and in the Irish schools on the

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continent for the wealthier classes. The serious attitude adopted by the Irish government towards education abroad is shown in the Acts passed under both William III and Anne, for the Restriction of Foreign Education. Fortunately as the century progressed there was a steady relaxation in the enforcement of the Penal Laws, but not before a generation of Irish Protestants had arisen who looked on any suggestion of the relaxation of the Roman Catholic bonds not merely as heresy, but as high treason. Although Ireland remained quiet during the risings of 1715 and 1745, it was the consistent opinion of well-nigh every Protestant Irishman that the recognition of the legal existence of the Roman Catholic Church implied the recognition of the right of a foreign power to meddle in Britain's internal economy. During a period in which England was frequently engaged in continental warfare the Roman Catholic was looked on as the unquestionable ally of the enemy.

If the Penal Laws were to be a success alternative education must of necessity be offered to a people who were always famed for their love of learning. We have emphasised that the Acts passed under Henry VIII and Elizabeth were in general just so much waste paper. The Royal Schools founded by James I catered for only a small section of the community. There were a small number of other schools founded individually either by private endowment or royal munificence; such a school was the Blue Coat Hospital, founded by Charles II in Dublin, or Kilkenny College, re-endowed on the same site as the old school by the Duke of Ormonde in 1684.⁴⁹ Then, in some dioceses, devoted Bishops established Diocesan schools as they were ordered to do by Elizabeth's decree, but we can all remember Swift's gibes at the Irish Bishops of the eighteenth century. He used to tell how excellent men were doubtless appointed by his Britannic Majesty, but on the way to Ireland they were set upon by thieves who stripped them of their possessions, and clothing

⁴⁹ Corcoran: *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

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themselves with episcopal dignity proceeded to Ireland there to fleece their dioceses. With such a class of Bishops it can be realised that diocesan schools were distinctly rare, especially as they were kept up by a clerical tax.

What, then, was the Irishman who desired an education for his family to do? The Irish Protestants answered the crying need for education by the establishment of Charity Schools which, at first under private direction, soon became State-supported. These schools in their earliest days were open indiscriminately to pupils of all religious denominations, and were accordingly attended by Roman Catholic and Protestant alike. Unfortunately, in 1733, they came under State control, as private benefactions were failing, and in that year an Act was passed for the "Erecting and Establishing of a sufficient number of English Protestant Schools, wherein the children of the Irish natives may be instructed in the English Tongue and the Fundamental Principles of True Religion."⁵⁰ This Bill showed its promoters to be thoroughly inspired by the example provided in the schools founded by Erasmus Smith in 1669. Smith was a Cromwellian adventurer who had set aside part of the estates with which he had been rewarded for his services to the Commonwealth to support schools for the children of his tenantry and of the country at large. That he intended these schools to serve a definite religious purpose is shown in a letter which he wrote to the Governors of his schools on June 6, 1682: "My aim in founding the three schools (Drogheda, Galway and Tipperary) was, to propagate the Protestant faith according to the Scriptures."⁵¹ This aim was ever before the governing body of these schools, even as it was quite obviously the inspiration for the Charter Schools Act of 1733. Nevertheless, the Charter Schools of the Incorporated Society for Promoting Protestant Schools did not adopt an avowedly proselytising attitude till 1775. None but Roman

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: p. 109.

⁵¹ *Endowed Schools Ireland Commission*, 1858, p. 11.

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Catholic students were admitted between that year and 1803,⁵² and horrible tales are told of the methods employed to fill these establishments with would-be converts.

The Charity Schools curriculum in 1721 is of the usual primary type we might expect. Boys were taught reading, writing, some arithmetic and the keeping of accounts ; girls learnt reading, sewing, and knitting ; and both girls and boys alike were expected to learn the catechism and attend church. But yet again these schools, although they have achieved a not undeserved notoriety, affected only the smallest section of the community. Statistics regarding their position in 1741 and in 1771 are as follows :

	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Pupils</i>	<i>Annual Income</i>
1741	18	372	£5,000
1771	52	2,035	£10,000

The revenue was in the main derived from the King's Bounty, Parliamentary Grants, and the donations and bequests of the general public, but such was the report presented by the Commissioners of Education in 1825 that all the subsidies were gradually withdrawn. Rarely had money been worse spent or organisation been more scandalously abused than by this corrupt institution. Although on its Board figured all the great names of Protestant Ireland, nevertheless the reports of the Commissioners inquiring into the schools supported by the Society make sorry reading. Time after time, till one is almost sick, one reads " Master drunk . . . scholars naked . . . signs of ill-treatment," until the bare recital of the items of mismanagement is overwhelming. The final conclusion of the 1825 Commissioners was that the schools were totally mismanaged and inefficient, so that " the evil was so monstrous that it could not be corrected." The endowments, however, to a certain extent still remain, and the Incorporated Society to-day in its work for Irish Protestant education is at pains to remedy the faults of its early years.

⁵² *Report of Select Committee, 1838* (op. cit.), p. 6.

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Many efforts were made during the eighteenth century to enforce the provisions of the Elizabethan Act regarding Diocesan Schools. By an Act, 12 Geo. I, it was directed that schools should be set up on land granted by the Bishops and Chapters of the respective dioceses; the Grand Juries of the respective Counties were to levy sums for the support of these schools, but the clergy were still expected to act as paymasters for the teaching staff. By an Act, 53 Geo. III, c. 107 (1813), the clergy were exempted from this latter tax. Nevertheless, although there were thirty-four dioceses in Ireland, only eighteen of them possessed diocesan schools in 1788, and these schools had only 324 pupils, of whom 46 were boarders and 25 were free. When a further inquiry was made in 1809 both the numbers of schools and scholars had decreased and several had no pupils at all. In 1824 the Commissioners of Education reported as follows: "We consider it extremely doubtful whether any attempt to establish permanent schoolhouses appropriated for the diocesan schools will be found to be ultimately successful. It has been seen that every endeavour hitherto made for that purpose, from the reign of Elizabeth, has failed, and that in fact, there were never so few, either of schools or scholars, as at the present moment." With but few exceptions the old diocesan schools have now passed from the scene since 1871.

The French Revolution awakened in the people of neighbouring countries a new sense of moral obligation, and the new spirit was evidenced in Ireland by the foundation of several new societies possessing educational aims. The first of these was the Association for the Suppression of Vice, founded in 1792 and incorporated in 1800. At first this organisation only distributed bibles and tracts, but later it commenced to make grants to schools upon three conditions:⁵³

1. The schoolmaster must be a Protestant and appointed by the Rector.

⁵³ *Report of Select Committee, 1838, (op cit), p. 10.*

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2. The Scriptures must be read in school hours.
3. Catechetical instruction must be carried out by clergy of the Established Church, who would also conduct examinations at stated periods.

In 1806 the efforts of this society were reinforced by those of the "London Hibernian Society," which had similar aims and objects, hoping to be a means in the conversion of the Irish people ⁵⁴ Both of these societies quite obviously were intended to act as proselytising agencies, and as such were suspect to all Irish Roman Catholics. They made capital only out of the misery of the people amongst whom they worked.

In 1814 the Kildare Place Society came into existence and proved itself the first organisation which made a reasonably honest effort at educating the Irish people without attempt to proselytise ⁵⁵ In fact a position of affairs now arises where in some schools the same master taught the catechisms of the Roman Catholic, the Presbyterian, and the Established Churches, and apparently occasionally such an extraordinary course was successful. But, as might be expected, there were not wanting bigots on both sides who were quick to take exception to such a state of affairs, though he it said to his honour that the famous "J.K.L.", Roman Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, early recognised that only through such a system of religious co-operation could any peace between the country's warring factions be achieved. His opinion was, however, outweighed by that of a majority of the Hierarchy, and so from 1821 onwards the usefulness of these schools to the Roman Catholic population steadily declined. Without doubt this decline in usefulness was deeply to be deplored, for the Kildare Place Society had been the first like society to make any serious effort at the education of the Irish people as a whole. The best scholastic advice of the day had been taken, that great educational pioneer, Joseph Lancaster, was himself present at the Society's Inaugural meeting, and one of his outstanding

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* : p. 11.

⁵⁵ *Report of Select Committee*, 1838 (op cit.), p. 7.

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disciples, Veevers, became first head of the Model School in Kildare Place, a school which became the envy of Europe, some of the textbooks therefrom even being reprinted as far away as America. Even O'Connell who, although at one time a supporter of the Society, was the main cause of the Society's lapse into the background, was one of the first to admit the Society's usefulness in areas where the Roman Catholic question did not arise.

The aims of the Society as originally outlined were as follows :

1. To assist by pecuniary grants, as well the forming and establishment of new schools, as the improvement of schools already in existence, upon condition that the principles of the Society be adopted for their regulation.
2. To maintain two model schools in Kildare Place in which to exhibit the plan recommended and to train masters and mistresses of country schools.
3. To receive masters and mistresses from the country in order to qualify them for carrying the plans of the Society into effect.
4. To publish moral, instructive, and entertaining books fitted to supplant objectionable ones then in use.
5. To supply to schools in connection with the Society gratuitously, and to all purchasers at cost price, spelling books, stationery, and other school requisites.
6. To maintain a system of annual inspection in schools connected with the Society.
7. To encourage by gratuities but not by salaries such masters and mistresses as appear to be deserving.

With the establishment of the Irish Education System these aims had perforce to be modified to meet the changed conditions, and in the long run the model school of the Society in Kildare Place was adopted for

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the training of the Protestant teachers in the new Primary system which will be dealt with later. The Kildare Place Society, however, is deserving of remembrance as the first educational organisation of a non-sectarian character to be established in Ireland.

We have now surveyed in a general way all the education provided in primary and secondary schools either by the law of the land or by great charitable organisations during the period of the attempted anglicisation of Ireland prior to the establishment of the schools of the National Board. To be considered remain only the schools of private foundation and those erected in defiance of the law of the land and after the relaxation of the penal laws by various representatives of the Roman Catholic Church. The latter schools are treated of elsewhere, but the former, those of private foundation, must now receive comment. The Royal Commission of 1788 reported that there were then in existence no less than 348 privately endowed schools. Some, like those in Coleraine and Derry, were endowed by great landlords like the Irish Society, others were excessively poor, some having a revenue of only £3 per annum. The wealthiest of them were Bishop Foy's School, Waterford, and Wilson's Hospital, Multyfarnham, both of which had endowments of over £2,000. per annum, which in 1809 had increased to over £3,000. The endowed schools modelled themselves on the neighbouring schools of the different establishments.⁵⁶ Where the endowment was large the school provided a classical education, where it was small the education was invariably of a primary variety. Such a large number of schools ought undoubtedly to have been of some importance in the country, but in many cases the funds were so mismanaged as, ultimately, to be alienated from their original purpose, and so their main importance lies in the fact that in them certain Irish boys received an education which might otherwise have been beyond their reach.

One only out of the many schools in this class is

⁵⁶ *Report of Select Committee*, 1838, (op. cit.), p. 9.

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notable for some slight contributions to educational theory and practice. The writings of Rousseau, the great apostle of the Naturalistic tendency in Education, were avidly consumed by all the well-read in every European country during the half-century after his death. No family in Ireland became more thoroughly impregnated with his doctrines nor more enthusiastic in practising his theories than the Edgeworth family of Edgeworthstown, in Co. Longford. The Edgeworths were a family of marked ability, as is evidenced by Maria Edgeworth's fame as a novelist, and she, together with her father and brother, took the greatest interest in practical education. Her father's *Essays on Professional Education* is one of the earliest of modern guides in the choice of a career. From 1818-1828, when it was closed owing to financial difficulties, her brother ran a non-denominational school on his ancestral estate, and there the children of his Protestant and Roman Catholic neighbours were educated together, with the full consent of both the Parish Priest and the Rector. No religious subject of any kind was dealt with in the schools, and as far as possible all references to religion were excised from the text-books. It is a matter for real regret that the school came to a premature end, as there were few other families in Ireland with such an interest in, and such a grasp of, educational problems of the time.

We cannot pass from a discussion of this period in the educational history of Ireland without pointing out that the faults in the Irish system of education were clearly seen by some observers, notably by Thomas Orde, Chief Secretary in the Irish Administration of 1787. He presented, in a series of resolutions, to the Irish House of Commons, a comprehensive system covering every field of educational activity. Sufficiently aware was the House of the necessity of his measures that all but one of his resolutions were passed unanimously. In effect he proposed the revival of the obsolete statute of Henry VIII. Schools were to be erected in every parish for the free instruction of the poor, and these

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schools were to be supported by a fund created through the taxation of the Protestant clergy and the wealthier landlords. The funds of the Charter and Erasmus Smith schools were to be gradually diverted to maintain four provincial colleges, whose constitutions were to be modelled on that of Christ's Hospital, and which were to provide a superior technical education.

For those who desired to follow a classical or scientific course there were to be twenty-two diocesan colleges from which scholarships could be obtained to two great academies preparing boys for the University. A second university was to be established in Ulster, but to this provision Provost Hely Hutchinson of Trinity, who also held high governmental office, was irrevocably opposed. The provincial colleges were to be distinctly industrial in outlook, for there was an increasing demand at the period, thanks to Ireland's expanding commercial interest, for technical education.

The scheme was intended to be of advantage to all sects and classes, but as the teachers were to be Protestant, and to teach the doctrines of the Established Church, Roman Catholics and Presbyterians felt themselves, in effect, excluded. Unfortunately, owing to a change of government, Orde was recalled in the following year, and accordingly his resolutions never took legislative form. Nevertheless his influence is generally regarded as having inspired the recommendations of the Committee of Enquiry of 1788-91, as having strongly influenced future Irish educational policy.

This concludes our account of the State-aided and supported attempts at educating the Irish people prior to the establishment of the National Board. Elsewhere we have treated of the illegal Roman Catholic schools of the period of the Penal Laws; it remains but to treat of those established by representatives of that religious community subsequent to the relaxation of the laws in 1782. In that year Roman Catholics were permitted to establish schools, though till 1792 licences for such schools had to be obtained from the local Protestant Bishop. That this licence was not an empty formality is shown by the recorded refusals as well as

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by licences still extant, granted to various religious communities. From 1793 onwards the Penal Laws were relaxed slowly but consistently until Catholic Emancipation was achieved in 1829. By the 1793 Act, not only could Roman Catholics establish their own schools, but as well they were enabled to proceed to degrees in the University of Dublin. These concessions were largely inspired by a fear lest the spirit of the French Revolution might affect the many students whom the government had been unable to prevent from seeking their education on the continent. It also came in time to meet the crisis caused by the closing of the continental Irish colleges owing to the disturbed state of Europe. As a result the first independent Roman Catholic college to be established in Ireland after the relaxation of the Penal Laws was staffed by exiled French priests. The establishment of Carlow College in 1793 was followed by the foundation of the Royal College of St. Patrick at Maynooth in 1795. This college, which received a government subsidy until the disestablishment of the Irish Church in 1869, has become the most important centre in the country for the training of the Roman Catholic priesthood, and is now a recognised College of the National University of Ireland. It also in its earliest days had many foreigners on its professorial staff, but of late years it has been unnecessary to look outside its own country for the requisite scholarship. Others of the early Roman Catholic schools were those at Navan, founded 1802; Clongowes Wood College, one of Ireland's leading secondary schools, founded 1814; and St. Jarlath's College, Tuam, founded 1817.

The success of government policy subsequent to the reign of Henry VIII can be estimated from the fact that when the policy was given up at the end of the eighteenth century, at least two-thirds of the population were Roman Catholics, and more than 2,000,000 people still spoke Irish only. From the governmental point of view this policy of anglicisation had undoubtedly failed, and yet it must not be forgotten that backward though

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the educational system of Ireland must have been, it was still up to the standard of the rest of Europe. Lord Chesterfield wrote in 1751: "The Irish schools and university are indisputably better than ours," and this was recognised as true all through the century. The idea of universal education had not as yet become the policy of any major European state, and the proportion of educated Irishmen was probably higher than that of any other country despite the effect of the Penal Laws. How they were evaded is shown by a House of Lords' report of 1731, in which it is declared that at that date there were not less than 549 Popish schools in Ireland. In addition to this, the large numbers of the wealthier class who went abroad must be remembered. The total numbers are an inspiring consideration, though such a learned man as Dr. Samuel Madden, the founder of the Royal Dublin Society, writing in 1731 adopts a very harsh view of the Irishman's hereditary interest in education. "The educating numbers abroad in colleges in Popish countries, as well as contributions given to foreign seminaries, do waste a large sum; as the Irish are not naturally fond of labour, crowds of them waste their time and substance as poor scholars, to qualify them for the laziest kind of life and hardly ever return to the plough and the spade."⁵⁷

It cannot be too seriously regretted that religious and political considerations became in Ireland so inextricably interwoven to the serious detriment of educational advance. Looked at in retrospect, the policy of successive Irish governments seems to stand condemned through its failure. But that is a very narrow view of the facts. No more considerable body of legislation in educational matters exists for the period in any other country, much less in our nearest neighbours, England and Scotland. The governmental religious policy was no more reactionary than that of any other European state, but on the contrary was, for the times, of a more conciliatory character. The Roman Catholic was not driven from nor exterminated in Ireland as the Huguenot

⁵⁷ Quoted in Brennan: *Schools of Kildare and Leighlin*, p. 1.

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was in France. The gradual relaxation in the enforcement of the Penal Laws took place at a time when continental monarchies were using every device to create the cultural unity of their Kingdoms. Toleration simply was not one of the virtues of the Post-Reformation period, and until the spirit of it could infuse the whole community, life for a minority or for a persecuted group was very hard indeed. All honour to that love of education which in the Irish people, Roman Catholic and Protestant alike, caused them to make sacrifices and draft legislation unparalleled at the time

Recommended for further reading :

Reports of the various Irish Educational Commissions, especially those of 1835-1838, 1854, and 1868-70.

Corcoran, T : *State Policy in Irish Education*, 1536-1816. Dublin and London, 1916.

O'Brennan, M. : *Schools of Kildare and Leighlin*, 1775-1835. Dublin, 1935.

Healy, J. : *The Maynooth College : Its Centenary History*. Dublin, 1895.

Edgeworth, R. L. : *Essays on Professional Education*. Dublin, 1813.

Edgeworth, R. L. and Edgeworth, M. : *Essays on Practical Education*. Dublin, 1808

Whyte, S. : *The Shamrock*. Dublin, 1772. (Contains a section entitled "Thoughts on the prevailing System of School Education respecting Young Ladies as well as Gentlemen, etc.")

CHAPTER IV

SIR THOMAS WYSE AND IRISH NATIONAL EDUCATION

IT is a strange and disquieting thought that the recent widespread celebrations in commemoration of the centenary of the achievement of Catholic Emancipation in this country should have passed with but little reference to one of the greatest and most far-sighted of Catholic laymen of the Emancipation struggle. Emancipation as such was but a trifling gain, unless every effort was made to ensure that the new-found freedom applied, not only to political rights, but also to each and every sphere of the varying activities of man. To give the Roman Catholic the franchise on the same terms as his Protestant neighbour was a good thing, but of what avail was it if there was no Catholic sufficiently well-qualified to be the recipient of his co-religionists' votes? It must not be a case of blind leaders of the blind, but every sinew had to be strained to ensure the immediate raising of the cultural level of the entire Catholic population, so as to be certain that the newly acquired privileges should be competently taken advantage of, and not rudely thrown away.

As we have shown, from the time of the Reformation any system that the English government had devised for the Irish people had met with little or no support or enthusiasm from that section of the population which was supposed to be benefited. Every new or original scheme was considered suspect by the predominantly Gaelicised and Roman Catholic population. And rightly so, for the main aim of the entire legislation on the subject was to proselytise the Irish to the Anglican faith, and to make English the *lingua franca* of the country.

Oppression invariably produces one or the other of

N.B.—In Chap. IV, references to Hansard: *Parliamentary Debates*, are not listed in detail, as the date of the speech or the debate is in every case supplied.

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two results. Either the oppressed are refined and strengthened in character by the ordeal they have been put through, or else the downtrodden people become noted chiefly for their emotional outbursts, often closely allied with deceit, trickery, and chicanery. If the latter has been the outcome of the oppression of the Irish people, then the paltry attempts at educational alleviation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be regarded at their true worth. For, very rightly, the Irish people refused to have anything to do with the education they were offered—asked to imperil their immortal souls and previous national culture at the behest of Protestant schoolmasters—Englishmen, to boot!

When the Act of Union was passed—with Roman Catholic support—in 1800, one might have looked for the alleviation of some of these depressing conditions. But despite the promise of emancipation which had bullied Roman Catholic antagonism into quiescence, the promise remained unfulfilled for twenty-nine years until at last an English king could overcome his moral scruples at what he supposed a violation of his coronation. The king in question was George IV, and this is almost the only known occasion in which that monarch showed the least interest in, or appreciation of, any moral problem. Those twenty-nine years he and his father had held up the sole salvation of the Irish people, yet even in 1829 there were still Irish Roman Catholics loyal to the English throne.

The Incorporated Society, after being compelled to admit that unless children were completely shut off from their parents they could not be converted, had its educational endeavour augmented in 1811 by the Kildare Place Society, whose efforts toward non-sectarian education we have described. O'Connell's success in securing political emancipation for the Roman Catholics of Ireland now left the field of education open for the establishment of schools truly designed for the needs of the people.

If O'Connell was the architect of political equality

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for the Roman Catholic, Wyse building on his foundation and with his assistance was the architect of the new educational equality. Thomas Wyse, who was born in 1791, came of one of the oldest of the Anglo-Norman Irish families. His ancestor, Andrew Wyse, is said to have accompanied Strongbow to Ireland in 1171, and the property he obtained near Waterford is still in the hands of his descendants. The family now is always spoken of as "of the Manor St. John, Waterford," a manor which came into the possession of the family at the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII. The family at all times took a considerable share in the affairs of their native city and county, and in the period 1452-1690 there were, besides several members of Parliament, no less than thirty-six Mayors and High Sheriffs of Waterford belonging to this family. The Mayor in 1690, Thomas Wyse, on signing the capitulation of the city as Governor to William III, paid out of his private purse no less than £1,530, the sum required by the King to save the citizens from an immediate levy. This sum was never returned, and in consequence of this, and of both previous and subsequent confiscations, the Wyse family became one of the most severe sufferers on account of their devotion to the Roman Catholic faith.

At the age of nine, Thomas Wyse, heir to the family estates, was sent to the re-established Jesuit College at Stonyhurst. Perhaps it was the vicissitudes that had befallen this famous educational establishment which caused Wyse early to espouse the cause of educational reform with special reference to the Roman Catholic point of view. The College had been founded at St. Omer in 1592, by Father Robert Parsons, to provide for English Roman Catholics an education from which the Penal Laws at home debarred them. It carried on its work there until forced by political conditions to seek an asylum at Bruges in 1762, whence it migrated to Liege in 1773, finally leaving the continent at the outbreak of the French Revolution, and it was re-established in the country which caused its origin

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in 1794. The school had thus existed for six years in its Yorkshire surroundings when Wyse became a new boy in 1800.

Immediately on its establishment amidst the Yorkshire moors Stonyhurst had begun to draw on the leading Irish families for its support, and soon it was sending a steady stream of students back to Ireland to complete their education in Trinity College, Dublin, which had opened its doors to Roman Catholics in 1793. Accordingly Wyse and his brother George, after spending ten years at Stonyhurst, entered that university, to associate with a goodly number of their school-fellows, including Richard Lalor Sheil, the distinguished author-politician and orator, probably a Waterford childhood friend; Nicholas Ball, the second Irish Roman Catholic to hold high judicial office, with whom Wyse spent two winters in Rome, where the two young men saw a great deal of Cardinal Gonsalvi, at that time Papal Secretary of State; and Stephen Woulfe, who by becoming Chief Baron of the Exchequer in 1838, preceded Ball by less than a year on the judicial bench. Such were the first Roman Catholic Irishmen permitted to complete their educations in full under British rule. Were they not in themselves whole-hearted and complete evidence of the futility and unreasonableness of the Penal Laws?

On leaving the University of Dublin Wyse went to London with his band of friends, all of whom were studying for the bar. There he also entered his name as a law student—at Lincoln's Inn—but without the remotest intention of following the profession. When the continent became open to travellers after Waterloo, Wyse and his friends spent some time in Paris, there making the acquaintanceship of everyone of note, whence they crossed the Alps in 1816. Love of art and classical scholarship, for which he had early shown considerable aptitude, led Wyse to spend two years in Rome and Florence, during which he acquired a fine taste in Italian literature. He had now become an inveterate traveller and spent the next two years in

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the East, visiting Athens, Constantinople, the Greek Islands, Egypt, Palestine and Sicily, during which time he acquired that interest in, and understanding of, the Greek character which was to serve him in very good stead during the years he was to act as Her Britannic Majesty's Envoy in Athens. During these latter two years Wyse was accompanied by Charles Barry, later to become one of the best-known architects of his time. Without doubt he made a considerable impression on young Wyse's artistic sense—but neither could then have realised that one was to be architect of a House of Parliament, in which the other was to be a member of the Ministry. Such a situation was as yet far off.

On his return to Rome, then as at all times since a home from home for the house of Wyse, Thomas Wyse became a close acquaintance of Lucien, Prince of Canino, the brother of the Emperor Napoleon, and in March, 1821, he married Lucien's eldest daughter, Laetitia. Despite the junction of such ancient with such imperial blood, the union was unhappy almost from the beginning, and neither of the parties ever met again after agreeing to a deed of separation in 1828; though Sir Thomas Wyse did not die until 1862, nor his wife until ten years later, in 1872. They had two children, from the younger of whom the present head of the family descends, and the family educational tradition has so far been very capably lived up to in each of the succeeding generations.

In the meantime the agitation for Catholic Emancipation in Ireland had been growing stronger every year, and in 1825 Wyse returned to add his cultured support to the popular enthusiasm. Immediately he threw himself into the political arena with the utmost vigour, so that his support was everywhere valued most highly, and he was frequently chosen either to preside over the newly established conferences and clubs, or to represent his fellow-countrymen in their representations to the English Parliament and people. It was during this period, immediately before the achievement of Catholic Emancipation, that he wrote his two-volume

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account of the Catholic Association, whose dissolution he urged once its purpose of emancipation had been obtained. However, probably his most important work during these years was concerned with the foundation of the "Society of Friends of Civil and Religious Freedom"

The Catholic Association, as its name was intended to imply, was a body composed solely and entirely of Roman Catholics united primarily for the achievement of religious emancipation. Founded originally about 1760, it passed through many vicissitudes before its triumphant dissolution in 1829. The temper of this body in its later days, as well as the general religious feeling, particularly of Wyse, but also of the whole country, can best be gauged by the foundation of this second society, with similar aims, established on a much broader basis.

Quite obviously a percentage of Protestants—even Irish Protestants—were whole-heartedly in favour of the claims of the Catholic community, and in consequence, at Wyse's instigation, a joint committee of Protestants and Roman Catholics was formed under the strangely liberal title of "The Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty." That this title was not a mere formula can be judged by the phraseology of some of the resolutions proposed and carried unanimously with acclamation at a Catholic Association meeting in Ballinasloe in 1826. It would be difficult to convey any more precisely the contrast in the ecclesiastical atmosphere of Wyse's day and ours:

The resolutions, proposed by a Mr. McDermott, were as follows:

1. The State should have no established religion. It should preserve its neutrality between them all.
2. Salvation is possible in all religions, provided you believe honestly and sincerely the religion you believe to be best.
3. To attempt seizing on public education, with a view to converting it into a monopoly for any

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particular class or sect, is to disturb in a direct manner the order of society

4. The spirit of proselytism is deserving of censure. Each creed or sect ought to remain quiet within its respective limits.
5. To keep the clergy virtuous it is requisite to keep them poor. Make them rich and you corrupt them.

These resolutions were not proposed by any of the cast-off orators of the French Revolution, they did not imply any taint of disobedience to the ecclesiastical authorities; on the contrary, the meeting at which they were passed was held within the half-ruined walls of the local chapel, and the local and neighbouring clergy were present on the platform erected before the altar. As a French onlooker was compelled to remark: "In fine, Catholicity and Protestantism in this country seem altogether to have changed sides; the latter is dogmatical and intolerant, the former has suddenly become almost philosophical." In support of this he quotes with surprise from Mr. McDermott's speech: "They talk to us without ceasing of Protestant ascendancy. This word ascendancy in a free state is what I cannot comprehend—and applied to Catholicity, I should feel as much in horror of it as I do at this moment when applied to Protestantism."⁵⁸

A distinguished French nobleman, the Duc de Montebello, happened to be present at this Ballinasloe meeting and in accordance with Irish courtesy a speech was required of him in return for a vote of welcome. His words would seem rather fitted for an assemblage of purely political malcontents and not for one of religious zealots "It is a consoling thing," he said, "to meet with men amongst whom the words of justice and toleration are not yet become empty sounds. Of such men there were never enough in France. And how is it possible we should be insensible of your sufferings—we who, delivered within a few years from our bond-

⁵⁸ T. Wyse: *Historical Sketch of the Late Catholic Association of Ireland*, Vol. II, appendix, p. lviii.

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age, have not yet forgotten the period when we yet struggled for our delivery ? We have at last conquered our civil and religious liberties ; we have conquered them by that glorious revolution, so little understood by those whose eyes are open only to its excesses ; and though Catholics for the greater part, if to-morrow Protestantism were attacked in any of its rights and privileges, to-morrow also would we rise up against the encroachments of Catholicism, with the same spirit and energy with which you rise up to-day against those of the Church established. Permit me to wish you, then, in the name of Liberal France, a speedy and total emancipation."

It is this same M Duvergier from whose letters these extracts have been taken who records his opinions of Wyse, whom he met with the other leaders of the Catholic Association at a meeting in Dublin. He gives very vivid pen pictures of all the leading figures, but seems to have been particularly impressed by Wyse's evident intellectual superiority. Of him he says : "At the side of Sheil I see Mr Wyse, a man of *esprit*, good sense, and talent. For the loftiness of his views, the extent of his information, and the justice of his conceptions, he is far above all those who surround him ; and one day perhaps his popularity will suffer in consequence."

After hearing the amazingly liberal views put forward on all sides by the Catholic Association and by the Society of Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty alike, small wonder that M Duvergier went back to his own country with a deep sense of amazement that Catholicism in France and in Ireland could in any sense of the term be a unit. All his letters recorded the continued surprise of a convinced liberal catching a momentary glimpse of Roman liberality.

And such liberality as I have mentioned was not confined to the laity. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church," is an oft-quoted phrase, and any student of history is compelled to realise that oppression often brings the best out of any institution

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or scheme of thought, even as success and achievement, through compromise and aggression, often degrade. The Roman Hierarchy, living close to a poverty-stricken and persecuted people had, perhaps, in these years, a far firmer grasp on the pulse of its spiritual family, and so the views of its ecclesiastics were tempered more by public opinion than by doctrinaire pronouncements from the aristocratic ecclesiasticism of Rome and the continent. In such an environment cultured laymen like Wyse ran a far better chance of influencing opinion, both lay and clerical, than they would have where the Church occupied an established and privileged position unchanged and unchallenged for generations.

It was in the spirit of this religious background that resolutions in the following terms were drawn up at a meeting of the Archbishops and Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church of Ireland, held in Dublin, on the 21st January, 1826.

The first declared: "That the admission of Protestants and Roman Catholics in the same schools, for the purpose of literary instruction may, under existing circumstances, be allowed, provided sufficient care is taken to protect the religion of the Roman Catholic children, and to furnish them with adequate means of religious instruction." Similarly, the second resolution provided that in schools where children of different denominations were in attendance, if a majority were of the Roman Catholic faith, then the headmaster should be a Roman Catholic; if a minority, then there should be a Roman Catholic assistant. The third resolution declared that to ensure the proper training of Roman Catholic schoolmasters, Roman Catholic model schools should be established in the various provinces, whilst the fourth intended to ensure that no book to which the Roman Catholic Bishop, *in situ*, could object, should be included in the curriculum.⁵⁹

These resolutions, with two others, were submitted by the Hierarchy to the Catholic Association, and were unanimously approved by that body, then sitting in

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Dublin. They showed a willingness to recognise that some form of agreement ought to be made with the Protestant section of the nation, if the nation was ever to become anything like a unit; and they show in the Hierarchy a mind as dissimilar as can possibly be imagined to that which later enveloped it.

For the next few years the country was so strenuously occupied in the last stages of the Emancipation struggle that the subject of education received little or no attention, but once O'Connell had received the honour of being the first Roman Catholic to be admitted to the Westminster Parliament, Wyse was not long in following him, being elected for Tipperary at the general election in 1830—the first at which it was legal to return Roman Catholic members of Parliament. He sat for Tipperary 1830-32; in the later year he contested the seat of his native city of Waterford, but was defeated as he refused to sign allegiance to O'Connell in every detail; he was, however, elected for the "*Urbs Intacta*" in 1835, and represented that city for the remainder of his parliamentary life—until 1847, after which he was appointed British Minister to Athens and the rest of his life was devoted to the affairs of Greece.

As befitted one of such a liberal turn of mind Wyse throughout his parliamentary career supported all measures savouring of reform, and his abilities were in consequence recognised by the Whig party whose Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, called him to ministerial office as a Lord of the Treasury in 1839. He went out with the downfall of the Whigs in 1841. He was again in office as Secretary for the Board of Control (India) from 1846-1849, but he lost his Waterford seat in 1847 owing to his refusal to join the Young Ireland physical force movement. After his defeat he retained for two years his position on the Board of Control before Lord Palmerston sent him to Athens, to a position for which he was eminently fitted, thanks to his early travels in the near East. Before his departure he was sworn of the Privy Council.

Immediately upon his entrance to Parliament Wyse

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began to make his contributions felt in that august debating assembly, but in the main his earliest speeches were briefly concerned with matters of Irish routine interest. The Board of Public Works established by Mr Stanley (afterwards Prime Minister and 14th Earl of Derby), who was Irish Secretary in 1831, was supposed to have owed a great deal in its inception to Wyse, but Lord Derby then, as at all times in his career, showed an amazing ability to absorb the ideas of others, and so often obtained praise and reward for a fertile imagination which was not entirely his own. Nevertheless this absorbent quality proved itself of immense importance to Wyse, as he was able frequently, in the future, so to work upon it as to get many advantages for Ireland which the private member could never have obtained.

Before bringing up the matter of Irish education in the British House, Wyse endeavoured to obtain as much assistance and advice as he possibly could from Irish friends throughout the country. Especially did he undertake a lengthy interchange of letters with the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin (Dr Doyle, better known by his famous pseudonym "J K.L."), to whose opinion we have already referred. In a letter which Wyse received from Dr. Doyle via Dr. Slattery, the Bishop writes: "If Mr. Wyse intends to promote education in Ireland he should look beyond elementary schools and endeavour to turn the attention of the government to the establishment of four Provincial Academies, in which the Sciences not requiring a previous classical education would be taught to the middle classes of society, for this purpose the funds of Trinity College would be amply sufficient. But there could be established as well Agricultural Schools by a Corporation instituted for the purpose, or by an issue of shares by an Association of Governors."⁶⁰

Here Dr. Doyle lays his finger on what was the frequent educational lament in the Ireland of that time—the lack of educational opportunities for the middle

⁶⁰ W. Wyse. op cit. p. 14.

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classes Throughout the days of persecution the hedge teachers had served the peasantry, the upper classes could afford to go abroad, but for any class between these two there were no advantages, and now that emancipation had created the possibility of a strong and numerous middle class "backbone of society" immediate efforts had to be made to educate it. Wyse offers his opinion on the subject in a later letter to Dr. Doyle: "Education, like all other civilisation, ought to proceed downwards, and I do not know whether the very reverse of this principle does not appear in Ireland. The lower class proportionately to their position are better educated than the middle and upper It is the contrary on the continent This is, as much as anything else, the cause which contributes to sustain the marked distinctions between the classes which is the curse of Ireland" And later in the same letter he writes. "Our whole National Education wants reforming. It is impossible any good—really such—any harmony, any sympathy, can arise from the disjointed elements which actually go under that name. We should have, for the higher departments of art and science, a well-arranged system of University Education Subordinate to this for the great body of the middle classes, the Provincial Colleges, to which you refer. Then would come the Secondary Normal, or Elementary Schools in the parishes for the education of the people." And finally towards the conclusion of the letter Wyse presents his arguments in favour of the establishment of another Irish university, primarily, because Trinity College was such a stronghold of the Protestant faith, but secondarily because any institution in a monopolistic position tends to deteriorate.⁶¹

This letter is dated two days (December 11th, 1830) after Wyse had submitted his detailed plan for National Education to the Irish Secretary, and as this plan was probably his most important contribution to the Irish people, for on its suggestions was based Stanley's

61 W. Wyse : op cit. pp. 16-20.

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Bill establishing the National Board, we shall consequently have to examine it fairly closely. He opens with these assertions :

"A National System of Education should be applicable to every portion of the nation. To be generally applicable it should be generally acceptable." Pointing out that it is the lower classes who most need this National Education, and emphasising that in the main these are Roman Catholic, he goes on to explain that the Catholic opposition to any taint of Protestantism makes negligible the further usefulness of the Kildare Place Society. Nevertheless he does not think that education should be compulsory. Each priest should be empowered to choose whether or not a school should be established in his parish, and, on the principle that "men value little what costs nothing," the children, the parish, and the government should all bear their share in the cost, no matter how trifling the contribution made by the children

Despite the parish's right of self-determination he nevertheless held that this education must be extended "not to a favoured sect or party, but to every persuasion, class, and portion, without distinction, of the nation," and he therefore makes four concrete proposals:

- (1) Let Catholics and Protestants be educated wherever possible, in the same school. Each in their quality of citizen contribute to it. Its object is to prepare future citizens for a common country.
- (2) Let religious instruction be given regularly to the pupils of each persuasion ; but by persons most competent to give, and most interested in giving, such instruction as it ought to be given, that is, by their respective pastors.
- (3) In order to remove all causes of religious discord, let religious instruction be given on a day, and in a place, most appropriate to such a duty. A separate room in the school, the church or chapel, might be applied to the purpose (if Sunday be insufficient) every Saturday.

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- (4) Let the schoolmaster (who, to educate with effect, ought to have the confidence of the pupils and their parents, *i.e.*, the parishioners) be chosen by the parishioners, but in order to guarantee that the choice be good and not liable to the chances of ignorance or passion, let the selection be made from a teachers' school, under the superintendence of a proper body.

With regard to this last organisation he wrote :
" This body, to execute its duty with utility, ought to possess the confidence of the people and of the government. It should, therefore, be composed of Protestants and Catholics, of clergy and laity, in due proportion. It might be called the Board of National Education ; and to it should be entrusted the application of National grants, the publication of books, and other subjects connected with National Education." Having thus described the composition of his imaginary Board, Wyse then brought up the question of the Provincial Academies for the middle classes, and concluded with a criticism of the ecclesiastical influences in the only Irish University of the day. For although Trinity College had in 1793 been the first university in the three kingdoms to throw open its doors to Roman Catholics, nevertheless the fact that all the Fellows but two had to be in Holy Orders prevented a Roman Catholic from ever achieving the highest rewards for his scholarship ⁶²

In March, 1831, Wyse for the first time gave the House of Commons the benefit of his views on Irish education, but without any obvious effect. In a letter to his brother dated 2nd August of the same year, he expressed some hope of persuading Stanley to take his point of view in the matter, and in order that the Irish Secretary should thoroughly understand the Irish attitude Wyse handed over to him his correspondence with the Irish Roman Catholic Bishops, to whom, earlier in the year, as also to certain Episcopal and

⁶² W. Wyse : *op. cit.* pp. 21-25.

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Presbyterian authorities, he had sent out an elaborate questionnaire dealing with the subject.

Towards the end of August, 1831, Wyse decided to bring in a Bill closely following the lines of his proposal to the Government, and on the 15th he was able to write to his brother: "Last night Stanley told me in most positive terms little or no opposition would be made by the Government to my plan, and begged me to send him the heads of my Bill to look over; he asked explanations, made objections to parts which I fully answered. He says we almost perfectly agree, this was a great triumph, knowing as you do how opposed he was a little time ago." Having thus brought the Government to his side, Wyse looked forward to seeing the fruition of his cherished hopes, but he was doomed to disappointment. He had given his Bill to a legal friend to be properly drafted, but when it was returned to him it had been so badly bungled that he had to redraft it himself, and in the meantime Irish opinion was both pleased and startled by the announcement that the Government meant to deal with the subject itself.

This announcement was made by Stanley in the House of Commons on September 9 and in a lengthy discussion he outlined the Government's plans. They were taken practically verbatim, and entirely without acknowledgment, then or subsequently, from Wyse's Bill, and so he had the disappointment of seeing his own hard work acclaimed as Stanley's achievement, as probably once before. However, he was far too enthusiastic about the projects he had at heart to allow any public expression of pique to escape him.

Mr. Stanley's lengthy introductory speech was occupied for the most part with an *apologia* for the failure of the Kildare Place Society, which had been receiving government grants for a considerable number of years past. He and several of the subsequent speakers regretted that the mere unannotated reading of the Bible should be considered by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy sufficient to damn completely the

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whole educational system, and Mr. Lefroy, the Member for Dublin University, made great play with the fact that it was not until the issue of a Papal Bull, in 1821, that the Irish Bishops were suddenly made alive to the great dangers therein. Several of the members, too, brought up the case of the elementary schools in Glasgow, which had been founded by one of the speakers, James E. Gordon, Member for Dundalk. These schools had included scriptural education, under the joint direction of a committee of Roman Catholic and Protestant gentlemen, upon which the Roman Catholic Bishop himself had served. As explanation of this contrast it was pointed out and emphasised several times in the debate that "there was in the Church of Rome a popular creed for Ireland and another for England—that they had a set of catechisms for the comparatively advanced knowledge of the one country, and another set of catechisms adapted to the ignorance of the other country." In support of this contention Mr Gordon cited the case of what is called by Anglicans the second commandment, which was excluded in the Roman Catholic catechisms in Ireland, but included in that taught in England.

As might be expected, practically the entire debate—a debate which was to have momentous consequences for Ireland—hinged around the question of religious instruction. If that hurdle had not to be surmounted the House would have been in complete unanimity on the matter, although as a matter of fact no such widespread system of education had as yet even been suggested for the much more wealthy and prosperous realm of England.

Mr. Stanley, once he had disposed of the religious issue and explained how he intended to ensure that the Kildare Place Society would be able to honour its financial obligations, outlined what he hoped to do with the £30,000 he was asking the House to grant. He proposed that the money should be placed at the disposal of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and the conduct of the schools left to the direction of a Board,

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partly Protestant and partly Catholic ; thus, he trusted, supplying sources of confidence to both parties. The teachers would be appointed by that Board, and the general direction of all the government schools left in their hands. The Chief Secretary thus did little more than mention what he hoped to do with the vote, but he had no difficulty in carrying the House with him. Wyse made but a brief contribution of welcome to the debate, throwing out, however, the suggestion that the Archbishop of Dublin, the Roman Catholic Archbishop, and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster should be *ex-officio* members of the Board. Apropos the last-named dignitary there is a caustic and amusing remark about him in one of Dr. Doyle's letters to Wyse : " I would pray you not to include in the commission any Moderator of Synod. He is a temporary officer and oftentimes a low-bred fanatic ; substitute for him some Elder or Presbyterian gentleman to hold office like the others for life."⁶³

But although Stanley had brought the matter before the House of Commons, the government proposals were only tentative, embodied in what were called " Mr. Stanley's instructions to the Lord Lieutenant," and to make them the law of the land Wyse, with Stanley's approval, introduced a Bill on September 29 of the same year, carrying out the ideas we have already outlined. Unfortunately the general election in which Wyse was defeated ensued during the next year, though not before he had been able to vote for the great Reform Bill, however, it effectually disposed of his own educational Bill, which never came up for a second reading.

As might be expected, Stanley had hardly expressed the government's intentions before petitions began to rain in on Westminster either for or against the Kildare Place Society. In consequence the Irish Roman Catholic members had frequently to take the floor to defend the attitude which the Irish Secretary had taken up. One of Wyse's most adequate summaries

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of the situation is contained in his speech of February 13, 1832. On that occasion, he said that the simple question was whether the funds of the whole country were to be applied for the good of all or for the use of a part only of the people. If the former position was correct, then the Catholics had a right to their full share. The great error of the late system was that the Bible was to be read without note or comment ; this the Catholics objected to, and the Protestants then said " You must take this, or none." Let any system whatever be applied, the Catholics had no desire to interfere with the education of Protestant children, and they only required that the same measure be dealt out to themselves ; and surely it was worth while to endeavour to promote cordiality by educating children of both persuasions together, by which early union of sentiment mutual good feeling might result in later life As to the mutilations of the Bible, which had been so much insisted upon, he begged leave to ask, whether there were not passages in that book unfit for the eye of youth, and for females more especially ? And whether there were not other passages so subtle and abstract as would only lead to confusion and error by being placed in the hands of youth ? These reasons guided the Catholics in their wishes not to entrust the whole Bible in the hands of children of either sex, and the Protestants themselves acted on this very principle, for they used an abridgment of the Scriptures, and a history of the Bible drawn up by some of the greatest divines of their creed. Further, the proposed plan of education was very similar to that of several of the continental states, and to that of the United States of America, in which the object contemplated was to educate the youth of all persuasions together. He added that he could not conceive that the exclusive Protestants of this country had higher claims to religion than the people of other countries. He, therefore, hoped that the government would persevere and go through with that plan which they had already so well begun On a later occasion,

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elaborating on the same points, Wyse drew parallels not only from the United States, but also from Wurtemberg, Silesia, Bavaria, and Hesse, in all of which countries similar situations had been met in similar ways.

Having thus seen the government adopt his views on Primary Education, Wyse attempted to turn its attention in a lengthy and well argued speech, on July 26 of the same year, to the problem of secondary education for the middle classes. He brought the subject before the House of Commons by introducing a motion which was agreed to, moving that an Address should be presented to His Majesty, praying him that the Commissioners of Education in Ireland might be instructed to enquire into the number and state of the diocesan schools in that country, and to consider whether that system of education might not be better directed to more scientific objects. This motion was to produce the famous reports of 1835, 1836, and 1838, from which much of our present data on the state of Irish education in those years is drawn. In his lengthy argument introducing the subject, Wyse, by no means for the first time, traversed the whole history of Irish Education in so far as it was controlled by legislative enactment, but he also spent quite an amount of time in defending the Catholic Church against those who calumniated her for her presumed hostility to instruction. Her Councils, he said, spoke another language. One of the Councils of the Lateran proclaims: "that means shall be procured in every parish for the support of a teacher, whose duty shall be to instruct the clerks, and all the poor gratis." The Council of Trent, he pointed out, enforces the same obligation; and as a result most of the educational enactments of Protestant England were based on Acts passed in earlier days at the direction of the Holy See.

His speech brought out more clearly than most of those he delivered on educational matters, the position that had been taken up by a number of the small

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Roman Catholic minority in an almost uniformly Protestant House of Commons. Few of the Roman Catholic members were better able than he, thanks to his family prestige and education, to state the religious case without unduly offending a great number of the Protestant majority, and he had frequently to speak with cultured moderation on such an argumentative subject, especially in connection with various motions, petitions, and resolutions on the Irish Tithe question.

His Waterford defeat, occurring as it did, about a time when Wyse's greatest ambition seemed about to be fulfilled, is, nevertheless, the typical result of the liberal tendencies of his character. A man of more than ordinary intellectual calibre, he was an accomplished linguist speaking French and Italian like a native, knowing enough Anglo-Saxon to compile a grammar of it, translating from the German, and being quite at home in Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and Danish. He was of course a great Greek scholar, and had a profound admiration for the sermons of St. John Chrysostom, the Golden-Tongued, which he read again and again. Like him, he was no mean orator, and from the literature of all the languages he had gained a very intensive knowledge of the world representing an intellectual order which Ireland had almost forgotten. Nor must certain peculiar circumstances in his education be overlooked. He entered Stonyhurst within six years of its establishment on English soil; he was already living when the University of Dublin opened its doors to his co-religionists. On his continental travels he could not overlook the fact that the greatest names in Europe would but a short time before have been proscribed in England. Others of his college friends may have felt the same reactions, but they did not have all of his advantages; most of them, when they left the university, had their livings to earn, and so had to compromise with existing conditions. For him it was different. Continental travels gave him a realisation of what his position

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could be, intellectual ability showed him the way to make things easier for those who came after him.

But he did not desire to see one oppression make room for another. Imbued with the supposedly Protestant spirit of liberalism and compromise his faith would doubtless have been suspect in other places, and in due course his ideas did prove too advanced for Ireland, but his attitude to life implied no complete and total obedience to any superior direction, but rather a tenacious holding to his own right to private judgment, at least in all things lawful. And so when in 1832 O'Connell required an unequivocal assent to follow wheresoever he might lead in the question of Repeal, Wyse refused to give it, and so was "out in the wilderness" from 1832-1835. His first fulfilment of M. Duvergier's prophecy that his intellectual superiority to his fellow-members in the Catholic Association would some day cause him to lose his popularity was now evident.

Wyse, however, was only out of the House for less than three years, as in 1835 his native city elected him despite his continued refusal to give unqualified allegiance to O'Connell. He then retained his seat, as we have said, until 1847. His period of enforced leisure from Parliamentary work Wyse devoted to producing his two volume work on educational reform—volumes which, showing an immense amount of research in the History of Education, attempt to define and elaborate philosophically and theoretically his views on the subject. Later, when we have recounted all the leading features of Wyse's public educational activities we shall then consider the faith and philosophy which underlay his whole work, and which is so adequately expressed in these volumes.

Since Wyse's Bill was not proceeded with, and since the Government did not feel called upon to produce any alternative measure, the National Board commenced to function in a somewhat haphazard way, under the guidance of Mr. Stanley's Instructions to the Lord Lieutenant. Among Mr. Stanley's instructions

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the following is perhaps the most important Defining the duties of the newly created Commissioners of National Education, he commands, "They will refuse all applications in which the following objects are not locally provided for :

- (1) A joint application from the Protestants and Catholics of a district.
- (2) A fund sufficient for the annual repairs of the schoolhouse and furniture.
- (3) A permanent salary for the schoolmaster.
- (4) A sum sufficient to purchase books and school requisites at half-price, and books of separate religious instruction at cost."⁶⁴

As well, it was directed that books and school utensils should be supplied at not less than half-price

The disaster about these regulations was that, firstly, they were merely suggestions and directions which did not have behind them any sanction from the law of the land, and secondly, even when some of them were embodied in statute law, these enactments were never properly enforced, chiefly because any prosecutions for breach of law would have to be made against clerical managers and as such might provoke unnecessary partisanship. The net result being that, for the next century in Ireland, primary education became entirely subordinate to the direction of the churches, although in a different sense to the way it had been directed before ; at least now each church had an equal chance of looking after its own children. But gone were the aspirations and hopes of those like J.K.L. who had looked to the unification of the Irish people through a system of religious co-education. As the century progressed the schools of the various religious bodies only became more distinct, till intercourse between children of differing faiths became in many districts negligible. And how could it be otherwise ? The Roman Catholic both in history and religion was taught nothing but

⁶⁴ *Report of Select Committee, 1838* (op. cit.), p. 12.

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the past aggression and ascendancy spirit of persecution of the Protestant, whilst the Protestant, spending more time on English than on Irish history, learnt only of the disasters Roman Catholicism brought on England, and of the glories of the Protestant Reformation. In due course a foreign observer would have had great difficulty in reconciling the two history books taught under the same authority in two similar schools standing side by side. "Between here and there is a great gulf fixed"—and such there tended to become between the Protestant and Roman Catholic parts of the nation.

This was not, however, of the essence of the National Board, but arose rather from deficiencies in its practice. The liberal spirit displayed by the Roman Catholic Bishops in 1826 soon gave way before the more ultramontane aggression of Dr. MacHale of Tuam, and soon the Hierarchy saw to it that in the schools should be taught but Roman Catholic children under their own clergy as managers wherever it could at all be arranged.

For the next few years, after 1832, Wyse lived in almost complete retirement until he was re-elected to Parliament in the early part of 1835. As soon as it was at all convenient for Parliament to receive it, he introduced his second Bill for National Education in Ireland, drafted on even more ambitious lines than the former one. The speech with which he asked permission for a first reading to be given his Bill, delivered on Tuesday, May 19, 1835, is one of the longest that Wyse ever delivered in the House of Commons, and shows evidence of the careful and painstaking educational research in which he had been engaged during his retirement. Some of the sentiments contained in the speech must of necessity seem strange to the reader of a century afterwards. Thus what would the man who could say: "Civilisation, indeed, seemed to have attained, in many instances, its perfection, but the machine is wound up to the last turn of the wheel, the pressure of our population is everywhere felt," think either of this age of electricity and wireless, or

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of a population of England increased beyond the imagination of his day ? He could no more be accused of optimism than could his famous contemporary Malthus.

As he had already asserted with considerable emphasis in his published work, Parliamentary Reform seemed to him to make Educational Reform indispensable. In his *Education Reform* he especially points out how cruelly inconsistent Austria and Prussia are if they give their people education but not constitutions. To him "nothing can be more absurd than the strengthening of faculties not to be employed," but before this point could be accepted with unanimity by the House he had to answer some members who still at that late date might have asked : "Are you quite sure that education is at any time necessary or even useful to the people ?" He asserted the Aristotelian view that "Knowledge in itself is neither good nor evil, it is the application of knowledge which determines either." And from these premises he showed the advantages which would accrue not only from any kind of education, but from a *good* education. "Tell me not what number of schools you have established, but what your schools are—what and how your schools teach ?"

Having thus shown the necessity of good education for a people, Wyse reviewed, as he had so often done before, the dismal educational system of his country, drawing an especially mournful picture of the returning exile, crowned by many continental academies, received, not with the congratulations of his fellow-countrymen, "but with the brand and punishment of a felon." Finally he concluded by outlining his plans as regards the membership, scope, and functions of the Board, whose status he wished to have placed upon a proper legal basis. These plans were all in consonance with his earlier ideas on the same subject, and his motion for leave to introduce the Bill was unanimously agreed to by the House ; but once again he was doomed to disappointment. Neither then nor at any subsequent period did the Government choose to alter the somewhat

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haphazard system under which the National Board operated, and consequently no time was ever allowed in which the Bill could finally reach the Statute Book although it did receive a unanimous second reading. For this governmental apathy O'Connell has been blamed in part. During those years the Whig government ruled Ireland through him, and he did not seem to wish to promote any comprehensive scheme of this description until he could obtain the repeal of the Union. Added to this, a spirit of ultramontane ecclesiasticism was beginning to animate the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in Ireland. Its most striking and liberal member, Dr. Doyle, had died in 1833, and now the outstanding influence came to be Dr. MacHale. Although he frequently expressed himself in terms of great admiration both of Wyse and his Bill, nevertheless he was quick to present certain strong objections, some of which are contained in his letter to Wyse dated July 9, 1835—firstly, that the Roman Catholics would be under-represented on the Board, as in times of crisis the Protestant sects could always be counted on to act together, therefore he objected to representation being equal for Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Presbyterians. Secondly he deprecated very strongly any attempt to take from the Roman Catholic Bishops the right to supervise the faith and morals of the teachers, who were, of course, to be appointed and dismissed by the Board. Finally he was against the suggestion that the University of Dublin should be extended to include a Roman Catholic as well as a Protestant theological school, holding that the example usually quoted in favour of the smooth working of such a plan—the University of Bonn—was in fact a bad example.

If Wyse was never to have the honour to see any of his proposals for Irish education placed as legislative enactments on the Statute Book under his own name, nevertheless he was to make a similar contribution of almost equal value to the history of Irish education. On the 22nd June, 1835, it was ordered

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that "a select Committee be appointed to examine into the State, Funds, and Management of the Diocesan, Royal, and other Schools of public foundation in Ireland, as also into the System of Education pursued therein with a view to increasing their utility, and to inquire how far it may be practicable and expedient, and in what Manner, and from what Resources, to improve, extend, and permanently maintain Academical Education in that Country, and to Report their opinion thereupon to the House." A similar committee was re-appointed on the 15th February, 1836, and on the 5th December, 1837. After each re-commissioning, Thomas Wyse was appointed Chairman, and as such he had a remarkable opportunity of making himself thoroughly *au fait*, not only with all the systems of education in the types of the schools named in the Committee's mandate, but also with all other systems of education, whether British or Continental, that could usefully be studied with regard to making improvements in Ireland. Leading educational specialists in the three kingdoms were called to give evidence before the Committee, these including representatives of a school like Bristol College, where corporal punishment was completely forbidden. The arguments that this College presented against such punishment are of the most modern kind. "I think its only recommendation is its being of a brief and summary way of settling matters where a large class (of 50 or 60) is under the care of one master, who, of course, would have great difficulty, but not even then, I think, insuperable, in applying the higher and better means of keeping up discipline. Its effect on the mind of the sufferer is, I think, generally very bad. It either produces submission and obedience (and that too often feigned) by an appeal to very low feelings and motives or else, which is the more common case, it hardens the body and the mind at once." Thus ran an extract from a letter from Mr. Price, head of the Junior School, read by his Principal, Dr. Jerrard, before the Committee⁶⁵

⁶⁵ *Ibid*: (Minutes of Evidence) Vol. II, p. 141.

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Besides the large volume of evidence obtained regarding educational experiments in the British Isles, such as those worked after the Bell and Lancaster systems, or owing their inspiration to Pestalozzi and de Fellenberg, several members of the committee visited the continent, and returned to give evidence regarding the continental systems. Conspicuous among these witnesses was John Bowring, LL.D., M.P., who made a close study of conditions in Switzerland, where he said: "I have, as a matter of fact, seen in Geneva and elsewhere, the children of Unitarian and Trinitarian, of Protestant and Catholic parents, educated in the same schools, and nothing like the shape or shadow of religious dissension or discussion between them."⁶⁶ However, probably from the Irish point of view, the most important witness examined by the Committee was the Rev. Nicholas afterwards Cardinal, Wiseman, D.D., who gave a detailed summary concerning education within the Papal States, as well as commenting not only on Roman Catholic education in England, but also throughout the continent thereby among other things supporting Wyse's plan of establishing a second Divinity school in connection with the University of Dublin, following the precedent of the University of Bonn.⁶⁷

These committees made two interim reports, giving the entire evidence presented to them, together with several more than valuable appendices, before presenting their final report on August 9, 1838. Throughout the sittings Wyse had uniformly been present to take the chair, and by virtue of that office cannot have asked less than 5,000 questions of the witnesses brought before him, all of which questions and answers are embodied in the first two documents presented.

The report itself was, in its entirety, composed by Wyse, and was unanimously approved by the other members of the committee, emblematic of the harmony into which he had guided them. The criticism of the established school system is at times most scathing.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* : *Report of Select Committee*, 1838. (Minutes of Evidence) Vol. II, p. 9.

⁶⁷ Wyse, W. : *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50, 24-49, 62-86.

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Thus of the Parochial schools established in accordance with 28 Henry VIII, c. 15, the Report says : "The administration of these schools lies solely on the local incumbent or his substitutes ; there are no periodical reports ; the public possesses over them no direction or controlling power ; their establishment, conduct, and continuance depend exclusively upon individuals. It is a matter, therefore, of no surprise that parochial schools (in the words of Mr. D'Alton) were never established in any great number in Ireland, ' nor calculated at any time to answer fully the purposes for which they were instituted '."

The working of the newly established National Board quite obviously came in for close attention from the Committee, and is very adequately described in their report. They explain that the National Schools are placed directly under the control and regulation of the Board of Commissioners. The Board is entrusted with adequate means of enforcing the regulations ; it may dismiss the teacher, withdraw the grant, etc., in case of departure from the rules which have been strictly laid down. A staff of inspectors, selected only after rigorous examination, is kept by the Board, to whom frequent reports are made. The Board, as then constituted, included a certain number of clerical and lay personages, not *ex-officio* but all nominated by the Crown from the different religious persuasions. Unanimity in all matters relating to the publication of books is insisted on, when those books are concerned with religious instruction "in order to prevent the supposition that persons of one creed might, by forming a majority of the Board, send forth extracts not approved by those of another."

The Committee concluded this section of the Report by an expression of distinct approval of the system as at that time working. "This system of administration seems to admit a more rigorous, minute, and extended public control and direction than any hitherto applied to education in Ireland. The schools being under the immediate observation of not only local committees of

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the applicants, but of publicly appointed inspectors ; the inspectors, teachers, etc., being responsible to the Commissioners ; the Commissioners in their turn, to Parliament ; and Parliament, acting under the public eye, and expressing the public will, there is little doubt that such machinery, well applied and well worked, is adequate for the management, in a really national sense, of any system of education."

Having thus given a favourable opinion of the National Board, the report of the Committee goes on to make some suggestions regarding the nature of that body. It expressed itself as undecided as to whether or no there should be an *ex-officio* chairman, and if so, of what official it was to be ; however, the general weight of opinion seemed to be against *ex-officio* members altogether. It would be unwise, they suggested, to limit the number of the members, as it must depend upon the duties and functions entrusted to them ; and consequently it might be necessary at different times to extend or restrict the membership. Here the Committee interpolated a very important recommendation : that in addition to the Honorary Members there should also be a certain number of salaried Commissioners, one, it was suggested, for each department of the Board's activities. "The public would thus acquire an incontestable right to exact attention, and the orderly and uniform march of each department be effectually ensured."

The Committee then propounded the powers which in their opinion should be conferred upon the Board in order that it might be in a position to carry out its several duties. These powers should include :

1. The power to purchase, lease, and hold land for the public use.
2. The power to build schools, houses for teachers, school offices, etc.
3. The power to outfit—at least in the first instance.
4. The power to prescribe regulations for the management of the schools.

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5. The power to educate teachers.
6. The power to act as publishers, and in cases of necessity, to distribute school requisites gratuitously.

Having outlined briefly how these powers might be exercised, the Committee went on to discuss the relationship between the Central Board and proposed district committees, a discussion which in some measure foreshadows the present arrangement in Northern Ireland, where a central ministry directs and controls the working of regional committees. They emphasised that the relationship would be most strongly strained on the subject of salaries, and after an exhaustive consideration of the problem decided that the teacher should be paid a standard salary from headquarters, but also might receive fees from the pupils—as yet a state of affairs was not envisaged where national education would be on a free basis.⁶⁸

Having thus discussed the state of elementary education and pointed out where it was thought the working of the newly established Board could be improved, the Committee continued to devote the remainder of its report to the consideration of “the existing state, funds, and management of the Diocesan, Royal, and other schools of Public Foundation in Ireland, as also into the system of instruction pursued therein.” Over twenty pages of the report are devoted to a historical summary of the work and present condition of these schools, and the conclusions reached, except with regard to the Royal Schools, are by no means pleasant reading. They record that only one school—the Belfast Academical Institution—had in any way kept pace with the needs of the time, as regards the mechanical, physical, and moral sciences, and they spoke in the highest terms of the effect this school had upon the population of Belfast. The Committee all throughout was greatly perturbed at the entire absence of any scientific instruction in the schools, and when, towards the end of the Report, they elaborated courses of

⁶⁸ *Report of Select Committee*, 1838 pp. 66-73.

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instruction for the county academies which they proposed should be set up, a due emphasis was placed upon the various sciences—they even suggested a certain elementary knowledge of scientific subjects for the National Board Schools, a recommendation which even yet is rarely carried out

As far as secondary and higher education are concerned, the Committee presented a plan almost as mathematically and scientifically accurate as that which Napoleon enforced upon France when he created his centralised University. Fortunately, or unfortunately, Ireland had not passed through as a serious a revolutionary period as France in the time of Napoleon, and consequently local and territorial patriotism would still have been distinctly strong had any attempt been made to bring in the changes the Committee envisaged into the admittedly inefficient Protestant system

The plan outlined by the Committee suggested an organised gradation of schools. Each parish should have its elementary schools, each county its secondary: above these there should be provincial academies which might or might not have the constitution of, or be subordinate to, a university. The first desideratum had already been practically obtained, the last was achieved ultimately by the creation of the Queen's Colleges, then of the Royal University, and finally of the National University, with Queen's University, Belfast, independent, and Magee College, Derry, subordinate to the University of Dublin.

The final section of the Report dealt with the supplementary education afforded by museums, libraries, botanical gardens, art galleries, observatories, and the like, all of which hitherto had been founded and supported by societies and individuals. These, they recommended, should, wherever possible, be established by joint action of the Board and a local authority, as they tend "so immediately to enlarge and perpetuate the advantages" of all other branches of education, and nevertheless with which the country is as yet most inadequately provided.

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Finally the Committee directed the attention of the House of Commons to the mode by which they proposed these suggestions should be carried into effect. They proposed :—⁶⁹

1. A Bill dissolving the present Board of Commissioners entrusted with the management of the Diocesan, Royal, and other schools of public foundation, and constituting a Board of National Education on the principles stated above.
2. A Bill for the establishment and maintenance of elementary education in Ireland.
3. A Bill for the establishment and maintenance of academical, collegiate, and professional education in Ireland.
4. A Bill for the establishment and maintenance of libraries, scientific institutions, museums, etc., or of subsidiary education in Ireland.

Like so many other reports presented by various Royal Commissions to the House of Commons, no immediate action was taken upon this one. But future legislation on the various aspects of Ireland's educational problems makes it quite evident that each successive series of draftsmen found in this Report an inexhaustible supply of material from which to derive advice and opinion on the matters upon which they might desire to legislate. It is beyond question the most valuable single contribution of a historical nature that has ever been presented upon Irish education, and depicts Wyse in a favourable light as a specialist in every branch of the educational system.

Despite the work that of necessity Wyse had to put into the production of this Report, he was not during the three years of the Committee's sessions entirely silent in Parliament. On the 25th March, 1836, he brought forward, for the third time, in the House of Commons, his Bill regularising the position of the Irish National Board—the same Bill which in the previous year had reached its second reading but failed to get

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any further. Once again the Bill met with a cordial reception, even receiving the approbation of the Government, expressed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—the Rt Hon. T. Spring-Rice—and once again approbation on the part of the Government was not enough, and no more was heard of it. In the same year, too, he supported the resolution enquiring into the usefulness of the Royal Academy in its relationship with the people, and he dilated upon the purpose of what, in the Select Committee Report, he terms Supplementary Education.

Immediately his report had been presented to the House of Commons, Wyse, whose health was feeling the effects of his hard work, went to the continent for a rest, but hardly had he departed before he was recalled to Ireland. His report had created a tremendous sensation at home, and within a month's time from the date of its publication a Committee had been established in Cork to support the establishment of a University in that city. After preparatory meetings on November 4, a great public meeting was held on the 15th November, where Wyse made "a marvellous speech" lasting over an hour and a half, and most amazingly well-received. The meeting passed no less than ten resolutions, including one proposing an Address to the Queen, which Wyse and two other gentlemen were to lay before the Lord Lieutenant, by him to be transmitted across the channel. This Address, which pleaded for the establishment of a provincial university at Cork, emphasised the loyalty of the people to the crown, and reminded her Majesty that it was another English Queen who had established the one university then existing in the country. Having explained the necessity of the university for the improving of middle class education, the Address goes on: "and may it please your Majesty, we look forward to a still higher good, a still nobler result from this undertaking; excluding as it does, in the first principles on which it is founded, all political and sectarian considerations and uniting men of all parties and opinions in a great and national spirit, we

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earnestly and confidently hope that it will be the means of softening down those irritating asperities which create much misery and so effectually retard the progress of improvement in Ireland."

During his visit to the continent, Wyse had been staying with his family in Bonn, and in consequence he had taken the opportunity to examine fairly closely the system of mixed religious education existing there, already brought to the notice of the Irish people in that Report of the Select Committee, including the evidence given by Cardinal Wiseman. As Wyse wrote subsequently: "At Bonn, in the gymnasium, for instance, Catholics and Protestants are found constantly side by side. Their religious instruction is minute and ample, embracing not only religious dogma, but Sacred and Church History, as appears from the school curcus; it is given regularly to each persuasion by their respective teachers, under the same roof, but apart. No evil seems to result from this arrangement, it leads neither to religious discord nor to religious indifference. Each adheres to his own faith, but respects that of others."⁷⁰ However, he did not merely draw parallels from the University of Bonn, but he also drew the attention of his audience to the struggle that was at that time going on in European schools between classical and scientific instruction. "In Bavaria it has terminated in a compromise. In North Germany and Holland the first has predominated; in France and Belgium and Switzerland the latter. In Bavaria the two great departments were at first separately cultivated; they are now united in a great degree, even in their highest development. In the University of Munich there is a technological or industrial faculty. In the University of Brussels they have not only enlarged the practical course but actually petitioned for the suppression of Greek. In the University of Liege, the faculty of Science (Loi 27 September, 1835) embraces "L'exploitation des mines, la metallurgie, la geometrie descriptive avec des applications speciales à la construction des machines."

⁷⁰ Wyse, W.: op. cit., pp. 53-60.

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In the University of Gand there is in the same faculty a section 'de Ponts et Chaussées,' comprising hydraulics, mechanics, natural history, applicable to the arts—another of arts and manufactures, containing mineralogy, chemistry, and their applications, a third of civil architecture, etc., etc.—whilst the social and administrative sciences such as *Economie Politique*, *Science Financière*, *Droit Administratif*, etc., are principally cultivated in the University of Brussels." He went on to refer to the attempts being made to join the two branches of learning under the same roof, and then proceeded: "I shall always deprecate the total exclusion of ancient learning from our places of education. The ancient languages enshrine the rich treasures of ancient thought; they are admirable logical instruments; they are excellent exercises both of the reasoning and the imaginative faculties. The past cannot be cut off from the present of any nation; the present is rooted in the past, and to conceive it in its noblest and most useful sense, it is in the past that it must be studied. But I am no less sensible of the demands of the present time, or less anxious to provide for them. We are not all mind, and the material and physical interest of the present age demand no less the study and improvement of the instruments furnished for their developments in the mathematical and physical sciences. Both should therefore be united in the contemplated Provincial Colleges, leaving to the student to select from each. They are not opponents, but generous rivals, sisters of the same family, varied means to the same end."⁷¹

He passed from the discussion of the nature of the education to be given in these Provincial Colleges, to the question of to whom this education was to be accessible. "It should be open to all classes, rich and poor. To secure this there should be no bar imposed by heavy expense, great distance, or vexatious formalities, much less by aristocratic distinctions such as prevail in other places. On grounds of economy it will

⁷¹ Wyse W.: *op. cit.*, p. 60.

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be necessary to adopt the system practised in Scotland and on the continent. Buildings for the residences of the professors and lecturers for the students, for museums libraries, etc., but no chamber for the pupils, nothing which can entail expense in the shape of lodging and board." Using the example of Belfast, he worked out that the fees ought to be not more than £8 a year, and he emphasised that this instruction was to be given "to all sects without distinction. The time has now gone by for monopolies, and of all monopolies there is none so irrational, so un-Christian, so tyrannical as the monopoly of knowledge. The committee has provided for this by two recommendations. No tests are required. It also excludes divinity degrees and faculties." This he justified on the grounds that each of the three major religious denominations in the country already had their divinity school—"the Protestant at the Dublin University, the Catholic at Maynooth, and the Presbyterian at Belfast"—but he added that he personally saw nothing against a duplicate Protestant and Roman Catholic faculty, thereby reiterating the position he had previously espoused regarding Trinity College, and in his controversy with Dr. MacHale. He concluded his memorable speech at Cork by confuting those who contended that he was actuated by personal animus against his own University of Dublin, which, it was alleged, would be the loser by any of those schemes, and he further asserted that Trinity ought to be glad of the imminent competition. As he emphasised: "There is little renown in winning when there is no contest."⁷²

So effective had been Wyse's address at this meeting that in the following week the *Freeman's Journal* could comment on it in a leading article, referring to it as follows: "On that occasion (of the meeting) Mr. Wyse made a statement, which we have seldom seen equalled for philosophical views combined with practical utility.

⁷² Wyse, T.: *Speech on the Extension and Improvement of Academical Collegiate and University Education in Ireland* (Cork, 1845).

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As chairman of the late Committee in the House of Commons, he is admirably calculated to agitate this subject, and the result of his exertions has been to create a general and unanimous feeling in favour of the object. At present we regard the principle as carried—that is, the establishment of large collegiate institutions in each of the four provinces, open to all parties without distinction, and devoted to the dissemination of those practical and useful objects which are so much needed in the present day.”

Despite the certainty with which the *Freeman's Journal* regarded the establishment of these provincial colleges, circumstances and politics combined to delay all consideration of the subject for the next few years. In the spring of 1840 O'Connell began his systematic agitation for the repeal of the Union, and this strenuous subject absorbed the thoughts and consideration of both Irishmen and Government for the next few years. In fact the chief result of Wyse's report and his public speeches was to set the Irish Hierarchy at loggerheads. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Murray, approved publicly of Wyse's plans, and drew upon himself in consequence a stinging correspondence with Dr. MacHale, the Archbishop of Tuam. On the continent the latter saw nothing but an imminent day of judgment. Atheism was rife, immorality abounded, Rome itself was suspect; he therefore aimed wholeheartedly at the repudiation of anything foreign, saying publicly: “We have heard enough about foreigners, and don't wish to hear any more of them.” He was a master of virulent sarcasm, with the highest legalistic conception of the priestly office, and nothing offended him more than to hear of “permission” being granted for the priest to visit a school, “permission” for a parish priest to appoint a schoolmaster. He was the doctrinaire ecclesiastic—all power came from God, and the priest was God's representative. More than any other man he prepared the way for that insularity and particularism which is the curse of Ireland to-day.

Wyse did not devote himself entirely to the services

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of education in Ireland, and on several occasions he intervened in debates concerning that essential service in England or Scotland, and in fact earlier in the same year (1838) on the 14th of June he had moved in the House of Commons "An Address to Her Majesty, that she will graciously be pleased to appoint a Board of Commissioners of Education in England, with the view especially of providing for the wise, equitable, and efficient application of sums granted, or to be granted, for the advancement of education by Parliament, and for the immediate establishment of schools for the education of teachers in accord with the intentions already expressed by the legislature." Up to this time all sums granted by Parliament for elementary education in England had been divided between the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society which with other kindred bodies had provided all the education the poorer classes in England received outside the Sunday Schools.

During the course of his speech Wyse compared the proportion of educated to uneducated persons in England, with the like ratio in other countries, to the great inferiority in England. He worked out that the proportion in England was one in fourteen, and then went on to say "Now in America the proportion was (1837) in the State of New York, one to three; in the State of Massachusetts, it was one to four; in Switzerland, generally, it was one to seven; but in the Canton of Vaud as one to six; in Holland as one to nine; in Belgium as one to eleven; in Austria as one to twelve; in France as one to sixteen; and in Russia, throwing the serfs out of the calculation, as one to six." Thus he showed that with the single exception of France, England was in the realm of education one of the most backward civilised States of the world. But arguments and statistics were of no avail, not even when he pointed out that apparently criminality and educated ability varied in inverse ratio. In 1837 the following data on the education of those charged before criminal

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tribunals had furnished telling evidence. Of the thousands, charged, there were

Unable to read or write	8,464
Who read and write imperfectly	12,299
Who read and write well	2,235
Who had a superior education	101

Unfortunately the Government felt that the present system of education could last a little longer, and so his motion failed to carry the House with him by the narrow margin of four votes. Interestingly enough, having regard to his future history, the name of W. E. Gladstone occurred in the list of those who voted for continuing darkness.

The Government weakened much sooner than might have been expected on this point, for less than a year afterwards, on February 12, 1839, Lord John Russell (Secretary of State for Home Affairs) announced to the House that Queen Victoria had appointed a Committee of the Privy Council to distribute whatsoever funds the House might see fit to set aside for the purposes of education. Thus in much the same haphazard way as the National Board was established in Ireland was this body created to rule in England, and to this day English education is still controlled nominally by a Committee of the Privy Council—though in point of fact, such are the fictions of the Constitution, such a committee never meets and its entire function is carried out by a personage termed the President of the Board of Education; a Board which, except in theory, does not exist. Wyse obviously welcomed the action of the Government in at last taking over some part of the ideas he should have liked to have put into practice, and after congratulating the Government on its wisdom, and having commented on the enthusiasm with which the country would hear the news—for there had been many petitions placed on the table of the House in favour of better educational facilities—he went on to emphasise the importance of improving the status and prospects of the teachers, touching especially

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on the question of superannuation, a boon which many teachers had no opportunity of achieving until the legislation of the present century made it possible Wyse was, of course, not unnaturally a little sarcastic that the Government "had in the abundance of their generosity gone so far (in the past) as to vote £20,000 per year to the schools of a nation of 16,000,000 inhabitants, and in the abundance of their wisdom confided its distribution to the Treasury, that is, to the body above all others, from the nature and multiplicity of its duties, and the qualifications of its members, the least likely to be well-fitted for such a purpose." However, he did show himself distinctly hopeful since the proposed system "rescues education from the random management to which it had hitherto been subjected, and begins the re-organisation of an intelligible and comprehensive system in its stead." One result of the Government's action was however that Wyse's motion for the appointment of a Board of Education, which came up again on the 20th February, 1839, was immediately withdrawn by him, as the Government felt that it had complied with the request.

In England, as in Ireland, religion loomed large in all discussions on National Education, and although Lord John Russell laid the Government's proposals on the table of the House on the 12th February, the House was still debating the propriety of handing over education to any board not exclusively clerical on the 19th June. Apparently a considerable portion of the House of Commons' time was at that period wasted in reviewing petitions from various bodies, corporations, and even individuals for or against any particular piece of legislation past, pending, or even imagined. Oft-times these petitions would be allowed to go to debate, and at all times they apparently provided an adequate starting point for any discussion. No matter what the subject, petitions could easily be organised for either side, quite often even two coming from the same parish, one for and one against.

The topic of education proved no exception to this

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rule, and so discussion on the subject of the merits or demerits of Church or Board educational government continued through most of the session. This continued debate on education gave Wyse the opportunity to make one of the most damning indictments of English living conditions that the House of Commons had ever known. The facts and figures which he quoted were appalling, and no member made any attempt to gainsay them. He told of large percentages of population living in cellars, of cases where families had to sleep up to six in a bed, where it was quite impossible to accommodate the sexes separately; he explained how it was possible that an ignorant impostor named Thom was able to convince several illiterate village populations that he was Jesus Christ, and he pointed out that at least 1,500,000 children in England were being left in complete and total ignorance. It was one of the most amazing speeches the Commons of England ever had to listen to, nevertheless they managed to prolong the debate for several days longer, so many there were who were still opposed to any system of National, Board-directed, education.

Once the Government did decide to appoint a Committee to consider national education, however, events moved fairly quickly, though the financial grants made by the House were distinctly paltry. Still, on July 15, 1842, Wyse was able to welcome the establishment of normal schools by the Government, and thereafter, year by year, he had the happiness to see the grants made for educational purposes steadily increasing. Without the same religious question English education was able to develop much more easily and steadily and without anything like the same struggle as had necessarily been going on in Ireland. During these years Wyse also took part in the debates concerning the establishment of the University of London, and of course thoroughly approved of this non-denominational foil to the ecclesiastical particularism of Oxford and Cambridge.

The next great topic of education to which Wyse

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directed the attention of the House, on the 19th June, 1844, was contained in a motion, in the following terms, which he had had on the order paper for some time "That a dutiful Address be presented to her Majesty humbly representing to her Majesty the importance of due provision being made for the University Education of her Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects in Ireland, especially of such as are intended for the priesthood, and the inadequacy of the means and system now existing for the attainment of such object, and that steps should be taken by an enlargement and improvement of existing arrangements, either by opening the emoluments and honours as students of the University of Dublin to Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, and raising the College of Maynooth to the dignity of a theological faculty of the said University, or by founding and maintaining a Roman Catholic university, with equal rank, endowments, and privileges with those of the University of Dublin, or by some other means adequately to supply the deficiencies now complained of, and, so far as may be, effectually provide for the future moral and intellectual wants of the Roman Catholic inhabitants; thus promoting the advancement and happiness, not of Roman Catholics only, but of all classes and persuasions of the Irish people."

This clumsily worded notice of motion gave Wyse a text on which to hang an appeal on behalf of the government's giving greater financial assistance to the education of the Irish Roman Catholic, and on this occasion his appeal had the good fortune not to fall upon deaf ears, for Sir Robert Peel, in a speech giving Wyse the highest possible praise, informed him that the government, realising Maynooth to be in an unsatisfactory state, were seriously considering in what way the College could best be assisted to perform its work. His tribute to Wyse was introduced in his speech in the following terms: "I am sure I shall state what is in conformity with the general feelings of the House, when I say that no member of this House

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is better entitled to take up this subject than the hon. gentleman who has just sat down I know of no member of this House who has devoted more time and attention to the consideration of the subject, and to devising means by which the advantages of education can be distributed throughout the country I must also say that the hon. gentleman has another qualification besides that of experience on this subject—he has the high qualification of discussing with temper and with moderation, which ensures amongst all the animosities which may divide us, an impartial and favourable consideration of everything he proposes.”

Such was the impression which Wyse's service to education had created on his fellow-members. He was at least not one of those persons “not without honour save in their own house.” He might not always be able to sway the cumbersome machinery of politics to a successful conclusion of his plans, but at least the singlemindedness of his purpose had made its impression.

In the course of his speech on this occasion he urged on the government the propriety either of founding a Catholic University in Ireland, or of opening the doors of Trinity to Roman Catholics as regards equality in all offices and positions, except those connected with the school of theology, or, and this was the expedient he apparently would have liked to see adopted, let them create one or more other colleges, constituent of the University of Dublin, and open for education to the members of the non-established churches. As he said: “A simple means of remedying much of the present evil would be to annex the College of Maynooth and that of Belfast, to the University of Dublin, the one the University for Roman Catholics, the other that for Presbyterians, and the third that for Protestants.” That at all times the creation of other colleges of the University of Dublin had been envisaged, he emphasised by reading an extract from the terms of the Act of Parliament 14 and 15 Charles II: “Provided also, and be it further enacted by the authority afore-

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said, that the Lord Lieutenant or other chief governor or governors of this Kingdom for the time being, by and with the consent of the Privy Council, shall have full power and authority to erect another college, to be of the University, to be called by the name of the Kings College, etc., etc." The remainder of the extract quoted by Wyse dealt with the lands and endowments which the King had apportioned for the support of the new college, in order that his royal will might be obeyed. Wyse's main point, however, was that the possibility had always been considered of joining other colleges with Trinity in the University of Dublin; in fact, future foundations are implied in Elizabeth's royal charter which refers not to a college, but to the "mother of a university," as if from her might spring many other educational establishments. Wyse pressed the same topic upon the government's attention when he spoke to the address on the Queen's speech at the opening of the next session, and once again he was promised by Sir Robert Peel that serious consideration was being given to the matter.

It is interesting to note here that Wyse's speech on the former occasion has come down to us in two forms, each distinctly different, one from the other. So far I have quoted from Hansard—the record of parliamentary debates—but what is apparently a much fuller report appears in *The Times* of the 20th May, according to which report, Wyse, in the course of his speech, advocated the claims of Cork as the site of the Catholic University, and also pointed out to the House how the Roman Catholic and Protestant Colleges in the University of London seemed to get on well together. Apparently *The Times* report had been taken from Wyse's notes, and it is possible that he had not the time nor the opportunity to say all that he intended to, or it is even more probable that in the heat of the debate and his anxiety to stress the main issues he overlooked some of his points—he was, generally speaking, much too good an orator for the reporting staff to be unable to understand him.

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On the 13th November, 1844, another great meeting was held in Cork for the purpose of furthering the claims of that city to be the seat of one of the new provincial academies and again Wyse was the principal speaker. On this occasion, instead of recalling in its entirety the past sad history of Irish education, he made what we may term his "apologia pro vita sua" and recounted instead the tale of his own efforts, in season and out of season, to obtain improved educational facilities for Ireland. He told of the Bills he had tried to get carried, of the Committee over which he had presided, and to some extent he summarised the results obtained by that Committee, and then he turned again to familiar speechmaking ground in reminding his audience once more of the number of universities in each of the continental countries. He went more exhaustively into the statistics of this question, in this speech, than he did in any other which we have recorded, and presented the following vivid figures :

<i>Country</i>	<i>Universities</i>	<i>Colleges of Higher Education</i>
Spain	11	168
Italy	17	146
Switzerland	3	24
France	26	420
Holland and Belgium	10	106
Prussia	6	115
Wurtemberg	1	87
Austria	7	267
Sweden	2	13
U S.A.	14	?

From this orgy of statistics he passed to a consideration of the history of Trinity, touched on the various attempts to found a University of Dublin before Elizabeth's advisers were successful in 1592, and went on to reiterate his oft-repeated point that other colleges besides Trinity could be founded within the University of Dublin. Having concluded the

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historical part of his speech, he went on to advise the people of Cork as to how their new college should be run if and when the government chose to found it. He pointed out the necessity at its inception of a more than well-qualified staff—no better form of advertisement could be found. He hoped that the buildings and the situation would be such as to give adequate scope both architecturally and otherwise, and he suggested the creation of halls of residence under adequate moral supervision. Touching on the dangerous point of theological instruction, he said that he would not recommend chairs of theology but it ought to be ensured that each and every student should be properly taken care of in this respect by the pastor of his own flock. He concluded his speech by expressing his confidence that the English government, having so far committed themselves, were bound to take some definite step about Irish higher education in the near future. The last words of his speech, expressive of all his hopes and aspirations, were: "I look to laying the foundations of a people, to the erecting of a future Ireland, which may raise and have a right to raise her brow amongst the proudest of her sister communities of Europe, their equal in intellectual power and glory; in moral elevation, I ardently trust, beyond them."

This speech of Wyse's at Cork is much the longest of his that has been handed down to us, and must have taken him several hours to deliver, nevertheless the number of resolutions passed at this meeting, with appropriate speeches from proposers and seconders, was only one less than at the previous great meeting at Cork. The ninth and last resolution concerned another address to the Queen, but we are more interested in the sixth, which was couched in the following terms: "That the warmest expression of thanks and gratitude are due to Thomas Wyse, Esq., M.P., for his eloquent statement submitted this day to the meeting, as well as for his untiring labours in advancing the cause of education, and that he be requested to prepare for

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publication his speech in the form of a pamphlet for the general guidance of the country." The Cork committee—the Munster Provincial College Committee, to give it its official title—had every reason to be thankful for his efforts on their behalf. He had been the principal speaker at their public meetings; he had served more than assiduously on their committee; he had presented the petition to the Queen to Lord Normanby, the Viceroy; he had interviewed the Irish Secretary (Morpeth) and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Spring-Rice) and he had suggested their city—Cork—in Parliament. No man could have done more for them. To him the people of Cork should have been eternally grateful, when, but a short time later, their desires were finally gratified.

It was a little more than six months later that on the 9th May, 1845, the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sir James Graham) rose in the House of Commons to request permission to bring in a "Bill to enable her Majesty to endow new colleges for the advancement of learning in Ireland." Wyse had won another stage in his fight for Irish education, and won it from a government with which he was not in sympathy and to which he was generally in opposition. Cork was to get its college, so also was Belfast, and for the third either Galway or Limerick—the government was as yet undecided. As yet the Minister was distinctly vague about all the details of his measure, as to whether or not there would be religious instruction—it was not going to be the government's purpose to provide such, but if private persons come forward . . . and as to whether or not there would be one university or three. And last but not least in his important speech, Sir James, a man different to Lord Derby, recorded his appreciation of Wyse's efforts. "Now, Sir, I certainly should very imperfectly perform the task which I have undertaken, if I fail, before I sit down, to pay a tribute of well merited applause to the hon. gentleman, the Member of Waterford, whose exertions on this subject entitle him to great praise. Under the most adverse cir-

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cumstances—through good report and evil report—he has struggled for this object, he has forced it upon the attention of reluctant governments and adverse parliaments—he has, greatly to his honour, done his utmost to give effect to his own views—and then, without a particle of jealousy or ill-feeling even towards an administration not generally possessing his confidence, but one, which, he believed, was willing and had the power to give effect to his opinions, he has renounced for himself the glory, and relinquished it in favour of his adversaries. Conduct more honourable could not be exhibited by any gentleman; and whatever the success of this measure may be, and whosoever the hands in which it may succeed, I shall never cease to think that a large portion of the merit of that success will belong to him.”

Such was the well-deserved tribute paid by the Minister in charge to Wyse, obviously with the concurrence of the House—and in return Wyse made haste to welcome the Bill most heartily. In fact on this occasion the House of Commons could almost be said to have heard him twice upon the subject, for Sir James Graham had included lengthy extracts from some of Wyse’s previous speeches in his introduction. The principal suggestions in Wyse’s speech were : firstly, that Conservatoria or Boarding Houses should be established under proper supervision for those students who came from a distance; and secondly, that certain other chairs such as metaphysics and the philosophy of history would have to come under the heading of theology, or at least the occupants would have to meet with the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities, and consequently these chairs might on occasion have to be duplicated. The first point is one on which Wyse had changed his mind. In his first Cork speech in November, 1838, he had looked on such houses as luxuries which could not be afforded; by 1844 he looked on them as essentials. The second point was the one on which these colleges were nearly destroyed.

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The great majority of the Irish people were enthusiastic when they heard of the government's proposal; so too was the Roman Catholic Primate, Dr. Crolly, so much so that he immediately agitated to have one established in Armagh; but Dr. MacHale proved the stumbling block. Despite Dr. Murray, Archbishop of Dublin, despite Dr. Murphy, Bishop of Cork, and despite other episcopal supporters of the Bill, he carried the Hierarchy with him, and on May 27 the Bishops published a memorial requiring the appointment of Roman Catholics to the Chairs of Theology, Logic, Physic, Humanity, Scripture, and History. Already in the House of Commons on the day of the scheme's introduction, Sir Robert Inglis, the extremely low-church member for Oxford University, had characterised the Bill as "a gigantic scheme of Godless education," and this epithet "Godless" was soon bandied to and fro throughout the country as agitation about the Bill was created.⁷³ But the government stood firm, the principle of the Bill being explicitly stated by Sir James Graham on the second reading debate, May 30, when he said that it was the earnest desire of the government to afford the people in various important districts of Ireland the benefit of academical education; and that considering the unhappy religious divisions prevalent in that country it was felt by the government that it would be impossible to admit all classes of her Majesty's subjects to the benefits of such education, if they attempted to engraft upon it, by the endowment of the state, any theological instruction. He stated that the government, therefore, intended to abstain from all interference with religious teaching in these institutions; but at the same time, facilities would be afforded for religious instruction by private endowment. Later in the debate the chief offending passage in the Bill was read out by Lord John Manners: "Provided always that no student shall be compelled by any rule of the college to attend any theological lecture or other

⁷³ Wyse, W.: *op cit.*, pp. 97-100.

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religious instruction, and that no religious test shall be administered to any person in order to entitle him to be admitted a student of any such college, or to hold in any office therein, or to partake of any advantage or privilege therein."

This clause aroused all the worst possible feelings of religious antipathy both in the House of Commons and up and down the countries. Equally was it condemned by obedient Catholics and convinced Protestants. With outraged tempers and offended religious virtue the language used became of the lowest. Wyse was anathematised everywhere. The honesty of his religious principles was called into question all over Ireland, till a time came when O'Connell's son could get a cheer for referring to "Waterford Wyse the Anythingarian."

The fight was so fierce in the House of Commons that having regard to the subject Wyse intervened very little—he did attempt to persuade the government to weaken on the points objected to by the Irish Hierarchy—but quite reasonably his heart was not too enthusiastically with the Bishops, and he thought the government had been singularly generous. He defended himself against the charges of the O'Connells, father and son, on another occasion, and obviously the temper of the House was with him, and as well he introduced a motion, which was negatived without a division, suggesting that the newly established colleges should be made constituent colleges of the University of Dublin.

The Bill finally went through the Commons, and in August Wyse had the satisfaction of receiving from the Provincial College Committee of Munster a resolution, "unanimously and warmly adopted," thanking him for his efforts on behalf of National Education and especially in regard to the establishment of Provincial Colleges. But as he said in his letter of appreciation "this resolution you have communicated was preceded by another of far greater importance declaring: 'after mature consideration of the various discussions and

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proceedings connected with its passing this Parliament, your strongest approbation of the measure itself, and your earnest desire to co-operate with the government in carrying it into effect.'” Having expressed his very great pleasure at this resolution passed despite the disapproval of Dr. MacHale and the O'Connells, and with the acquiescence and support of the Cork clerical authorities, Wyse went on in a very lengthy letter to give his final advice to the people of Cork and Munster as regards the working of this new college, and he appealed strongly to their liberality, so that by their contributions they might convert these “pagan” colleges into Christian seminaries. His letter concluded by throwing out suggestions whereby the Royal Dublin Society—suitably reformed—the Royal Hibernian Academy, and other institutions such as technical and agricultural colleges could all be worked into a comprehensive Irish University scheme.

This Bill became law in 1845, but it was not until November, 1849, that the colleges were opened for the reception of students, and in the following year the Queen's University was founded to unite them into one organisation and to complete the education which they gave. But before that time Dr. MacHale had persuaded Rome to send a rescript from the College of Cardinals which reached Ireland in October, 1847, and which declared that an institution of this kind was injurious to religion; a rescript which despite the protests of Primate Crolly, Archbishop Murray, and six other Bishops, was re-issued at Archbishop MacHale's instigation, he having gone to Rome to ensure victory, in October, 1848, and again in 1849, the last time denouncing the colleges as dangerous to faith and morals. However, before the colleges were finally opened in the face of the Hierarchy's strong disapproval, Wyse had shaken the unkindly dust of his native shores from his feet and had departed to represent her Majesty in the recently established Kingdom of Greece. There he spent the remainder of his life, and

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accomplished work almost as valuable as that he had
done for Ireland.

Subsequent to the passage of the University Education Bill, Wyse only dealt once more with Irish Education in the Commons before his defeat in 1847—that was when he introduced a motion with regard to the co-ordination of the preparations for entrance to the legal profession. A short time later he was defeated—thanks to the machinations of O'Connell—at the general election of 1847, and although he made no other attempt to be elected he retained his place as Member of the Indian Board of Control until his departure for Greece. He died there a short time before the deposition of King Otto, and such was the impression of England's attitude he had made upon the Greeks that upon the King's deposition they elected Queen Victoria's son Alfred to the throne—an offer which however he was prevented from accepting.

Wyse published several works in his lifetime, but one only, his "Education Reform," deals with the topic we are concerned with. Written during his two years' enforced exile from Westminster, and published when he was still but little known to a wider public outside Ireland, it shows evidence of remarkably wide reading, and of an amazing power of digesting facts. This power is one of the most important features of Wyse's character brought out nowhere more strongly than in his chairmanship of the Commons' Select Committee on Irish Education and in its consequent report. Even before he had assimilated the expert knowledge he had accumulated, his mind was already made up on all the major questions, and his opinion was only substantiated by the replies of the various witnesses. In fact in all his speeches on Irish and other educational systems one instance only of an apparent change of mind can be recalled—when in 1844 he advocated lodging houses and halls for students at any Cork College to be established, whereas in 1838

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he had said that it would be necessary to forego this luxury.

His attachment to educational reform was unquestionably whole-hearted, and in his viewpoint he was rather more international than insular. Even in the somewhat restricted arena of the House of Commons he was able to make his appeal not only for the education of the poor in Ireland, but also for the uneducated in England, when, as well as proposing a system of National Education, he on July 9, 1838, supported the grants to the English Poor Schools, for those of Scotland when, earlier in the same year (February 6th) he supported a motion in favour of the Scotch parochial schools, and finally for those of Wales for whom he spoke on March 10, 1846—one of his last speeches, delivered as if remembering something he had forgotten.

I have pointed out before that Wyse was hardly in accord with the English traditional conception of what a Roman Catholic should be. A Liberal by training and conviction, his whole philosophy, though springing from the sternest of moral principles, is yet imbued with the greatest liberality of spirit. Starting out from a definition of religion as pre-eminently obligation, he deduced that "perfection, through the performance of Duty," was the great aim of education. Happiness was not, and ought not to be an end; the law of Duty was to him the Kantian imperative. Yet despite his legalistic view of religion and morality Wyse was curiously up-to-date in many of his other opinions. He looked on education as the development of all one's faculties—physical, intellectual, and moral—and not merely as the compulsory acquisition of a little book-learning. For his day and generation he was quite a profound student of psychology. Though at this late date we may be somewhat amused at some of his misconceptions, at least he was already aware of the necessity for the incorporation of psychology in the school curriculum, and he had very decided views on the possibility of forming an infant's character

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by influencing its early years. Holding that the infant was capable of being moulded in any way, he was consequently able to say: "We are the accountable guardians of their virtues and their happiness, the creators under heaven of their characters"—although it must be admitted that despite this he could also assert that religion was born with us, and existent before any other experience.

His ideas on the actual practice of education he drew in the main from de Fellenberg, and from the Swiss Agricultural School, and in a lesser degree from Pestalozzi. The latter he thought the inferior because his training was too intellectual, following the recommendations of Rousseau, whereas the former prepared each pupil for the exact station in life to which he would be called, for it must be noted that Wyse was never a revolutionary Liberal, which is why he was finally deserted by his fellow-countrymen. He looked to reason to prove a case, whilst Ireland led by O'Connell and many a lesser light has of late looked rather to sentiment.

With both these great educational reformers Wyse was firm in his condemnation of corporal punishment, and in his advocacy of other than purely intellectual education. Both in his methods of reform and his aims of education his liberalism assumed the form of utilitarianism rather than radicalism. Persuaded by this belief, he could write: "The best system, then, of national education, is that which enables each citizen most perfectly to fulfil the various duties which his several relations, public and private, in society impose upon him, by giving to the physical, intellectual, and moral faculties the full perfection of which they are capable." In this national education he could also see the usefulness of the monitorial system of Bell and Lancaster as practised especially in its German manifestations; and there is no doubt that had he been given the opportunity he would doubtless have put Ireland in the forefront of educational experimentation, especially as regards school subjects, for besides

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psychology, he would also have introduced music into the curriculum—a subject then completely unknown in the schools of the day

The Educational Reform outlines the principles upon which he fought throughout his parliamentary life, and those principles were built on amazingly firm foundations. Every educational writer from Plato to his own time was referred to, and the experiments then being carried on throughout Europe are examined in detail and their values weighed. Small wonder was it that through all his struggles in the British House of Commons he could be seen to cling to the guiding passion of his life unfalteringly. Even if his Provincial Colleges were not at first a success, nevertheless their conception and their possibilities were magnificent and well merited the encomiums showered upon him in the days of his popularity. Here was how he was described by President Berwick of the Queen's College, Galway, in his first annual address delivered on June 17th, 1850. "Foremost amongst those useful patriots who directed their views to so beneficial an object (education) was Mr. Wyse—a Catholic gentleman of the most revered and unsullied character—to whose virtue and integrity and ability the country, the legislature, and the government have borne repeated testimony."

No matter how oft repeated Ireland's testimonies, none can ensure them till death. There is yet to be born the Irishman who for a lifetime can receive the attachment of that fickle people. When at last Wyse died in Greece on the 16th April, 1862, Englishman and Greek alike joined in a tribute of respect to a great envoy whose own country had almost forgotten him. England had honoured him, he was a Knight of the Bath and a Privy Councillor; the Greeks received him as one of their own, and the French envoy pronounced his eulogy at the graveside—Ireland alone had forgotten him. It is the fate of many of Ireland's greatest sons. Some have the good fortune at least to be re-discovered after their death. In which case

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some atonement is made, some reparation done. For Wyse that has not been yet. He was by far the most considerable figure in the whole history of Irish education and his influence still permeates the system he did so much to create.

Recommended for further reading :

Wyse, Thomas: *Education Reform, or the Necessity of a National System of Education*. 1836.

Wyse, Thomas: *Speech on the Extension and Improvement of Education in Ireland*. Cork, 1845.

Wyse, Winifrede M.: *Notes on Education Reform in Ireland, from letters, speeches, etc., in the unpublished memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Sir Thomas Wyse, K.C.B.* Waterford, 1901.

CHAPTER V

THE UNIVERSITIES AND HIGHER EDUCATION

THE University, or *Studium Generale* as it was originally known, first came into prominence in European History in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; though the oldest, that of Salerno in Italy, can trace its history as a centre of medical knowledge and research to the latter part of the ninth century. The Latin word "universitas" denoted any community or corporation regarded in its collective sense, and is in no way associated with any claim on the part of the university to provide courses in every branch of knowledge. As far as the scanty evidence at our disposal can show us, the university in its earliest stage of development was simply a scholastic guild modelled on the analogy of the trade guilds. In general there seems to have been a purely spontaneous combination of teachers, or of scholars, or of both together, and they were usually established in connection with some cathedral under licence from the Chancellor. Why particular sites were chosen, we have, except in very few cases, no evidence. The first great universities, which afterwards served as models for the rest, were those of Paris and Bologna—the latter famous for its legal faculty, the former for its theological. The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II was the first to attempt to establish a university by Royal Patent when he granted a charter to Naples in 1224. Immediately the Popes realised the significance that could be attached to the foundation of such an institution, and it soon became necessary for all universities to have their privileges created or confirmed by Papal Bull. It even became desirable for those already established to have their positions

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regularised, and legalised by the See of Peter. Thus the early Scotch universities, were established under the authority of Papal Bulls, and except for Oxford nearly all the ancient universities were approved from Rome.

To a large extent the early Irish Monastic Schools had provided for Ireland all that was required in the way of higher education, but the situation with regard to them was changed after the Anglo-Norman invasion, and from the latter part of the thirteenth century onwards there was a continuous demand for an Irish university, chiefly on the grounds that so many Irishmen resorted to England and the continent for an education, and returned but ill-disposed to the English government in Ireland, whilst if they did not go they were very ill-educated at home. The records of the Irish Church present a sorry tale of ignorance and illiteracy in the immediate pre-reformation period, and the absolute necessity for some means whereby the clergy should be enabled to proceed with their studies, so essential to their calling, was emphasised time and time again.

The first in any way successful attempt to found an Irish University was that made by John Leech, Archbishop of Dublin in the year 1311. In that year, in response to an application in which the Archbishop pointed out that there was no university either in Scotland, Man, Norway, or Ireland, Pope Clement V issued a Bull establishing a university "wherein Scholars might study in every science and faculty; and in all such obtain the degree of Doctor." Archbishop Leech died in 1313 and in 1320 his successor Alexander de Bicknore obtained confirmation of these regulations from Pope John XXII; but the infant university seems to have pursued but a precarious existence and after flourishing intermittently for about one hundred years it disappeared from history in the fifteenth century.

The university was originally established in connection with St. Patrick's Cathedral and apparently the

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Chapter were expected to act as the teaching staff. The first Chancellor was the Dean of St. Patrick's of that day, William Rodyard, and the Cathedral revenues were evidently intended to finance the project.⁷⁴ Unfortunately the university seems to have been a failure from the start. A very short time after its foundation it is termed a university merely in name. A petition from the Carmelites in 1348 stated that there was then no university in the country, and requested permission for six of their number to study in England in order that they might be better able to teach Holy Scripture to people in Ireland. In 1358, however, Edward III granted his protection to all students resorting to it, representations having been made to him on behalf of the scholars and clerics of Ireland pointing out that owing to the dangers of crossing the sea they desired to study civil and canon law, theology and other sciences in Dublin. Even this protection seems to have availed the students little, for in 1363 we find the Irish clergy apologising for their lack of degrees on the grounds that in Ireland there was no university or place of study.⁷⁵ Finally in 1396 at the Provincial Synod of Dublin we have our last reference to the continued existence of this university in the authorisation of a clerical tax to support the lecturers. By the middle of the fifteenth century the university can have been little more than a memory, for on the accession of Edward IV in 1461, the Earl of Desmond, who was made Lord Justice of Ireland, convened a Parliament at Drogheda, and one of the matters brought before this body was a petition from the Mayor, Corporation, and townsmen of Drogheda pointing out the failure of Archbishop de Bicknore's University at Dublin and requesting "because the land of Ireland has no university nor place of general study within it, a work of which sort would cause a great increase of knowledge, riches, and good govern-

⁷⁴ Monck Mason: *A History of St. Patrick's Cathedral* (Dublin, 1820), p. 100.

⁷⁵ Phillips: op. cit., Vol. II, p. 104.

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ment, and would prevent riot, evil government, and extortion within the said land," that a university be established at Drogheda. By 5 Edward IV c. 46 such a university was created to be modelled on that of Oxford and "to enjoy all manner of liberties, privileges, laws, and laudable customs which the said University of Oxford hath." Unfortunately the Act seems never to have been put into effect, and beyond the authorisation there is no further record of the University of Drogheda.⁷⁶

The failure of these two schemes created a body of Irish clergy as ill-educated as ever those of the eighth and ninth centuries were learned. A small proportion of the clergy obtained licences from the King to cross the seas to Oxford, Cambridge, and even to the continent, but the licences were hard to get and the students were not always very welcome abroad. In 1410 a Statute of the Dublin Parliament enacted that anyone leaving the country must first certify on oath in the chancery his purpose in so doing, and no Irishman adhering to the enemy should, under pretence of going to Oxford or Cambridge, be allowed to cross the sea. A similar exclusiveness was shown in a Westminster Statute of 1413 enacting that almost all Irishmen and Irish begging clerks (poor scholars unattached to any college or university) were to leave England. Students often stayed abroad for seven years and frequently they were beneficed clergy before setting out. Clerics studied Law as much as they studied Philosophy because the subject was so useful in recovering alienated church land but as the English power declined increasing restrictions were put on students leaving Ireland.⁷⁷

With the Anglican Reformation the necessity for an Irish University became even more urgent, and the English government came to realise to the full that without one there was no possible chance for the Reformed religion to obtain and retain a grip on the Irish people. One of the first acts of the reign

⁷⁶ D'Alton, John : *The History of Drogheda*, Vol. II, pp. 148 ff.

⁷⁷ Phillips : *op cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 126 ff.

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of Edward VI dissolved the foundation of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Apparently the nominal existence of this university had continued into the reign of Henry VII, for though degrees in Divinity and Canon Law were conferred only for a brief period, lectures in Civil and Canon Law and in Divinity were still being delivered after the middle of the fifteenth century. When St. Patrick's was dissolved, Dr. Browne, the Reforming Archbishop of Dublin, drew up a scheme for converting the Cathedral into a University, the College to bear the name of "Christ's College of the foundation of Edward VI." It is contended that Browne's scheme failed for two reasons—firstly because of the opposition of some of the prebendaries who were hoping to see St. Patrick's restored to its former ecclesiastical estate, and secondly because of the reluctance of both England and Ireland to expend upon education the properties which they wished to apply to other secular purposes.⁷⁸

Elsewhere we have quoted from the Lord Deputy's letter of 1583 advocating the establishment of two universities, one in Limerick and one in Armagh, but prior to that suggestion Queen Elizabeth, in 1560, had written to Sir Nicholas Malby suggesting the establishment of a university in Connaught and mentioning Clonfert as the possible site. Her intention was to unite the bishoprics of Clonfert and Elphin and utilise the joint revenues for the support of the college, which was designed to prevent the Irish continuing to go abroad. Once again the design got no further than the paper on which it was written.⁷⁹

At last in 1592 came the first successful attempt at founding an Irish University. On the third of March in that year a college was incorporated by Letters Patent, as "the Mother of a University," under the style and title of "The College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, near Dublin, founded by Queen Elizabeth." The Corporation of Dublin granted the site of an old monastery of All Hallows to the new

⁷⁸ Phillips, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 247.

⁷⁹ Corcoran: *op. cit.*, p. 49.

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college, and on the sixteenth of the same month the foundation stone of the new buildings was laid by the Mayor of Dublin. The first students were received in January, 1594, and the college immediately entered upon that eminently distinguished history which has led it to be declared "the only successful English institution in Ireland." It is interesting to note who were the earliest officials of the new University and College. The great Lord Burghley, most renowned of English statesmen, was the first Chancellor; Adam Loftus, Archbishop of Dublin, was the first Provost; and Luke Chaloner, William Daniel, James Hamilton and James Fullerton were the earliest fellows. Abel Walsh, James Ussher and George Lee were the first three scholars. On Shrove Tuesday, 1601, the first commencements were held, and amongst others James Ussher proceeded to the degree of Master of Arts. Thus at the very first opportunity a degree was conferred on a graduate to be reckoned among the most outstanding scholars in Irish history.

The college early developed strongly Puritan tendencies, two of the first elected fellows, Fullerton and Hamilton, being Presbyterians, and the second and third Provosts, Walter Travers and Henry Alvey being both non-conformists. Considerable attention was paid to the Irish language and once a month the service in College Chapel was taken in that tongue. The Prayer Book was translated into Irish in 1605 by Archbishop William Daniel of Tuam, who had been one of the original fellows; that book in English was the first to be published in Ireland when the Protestant Reformers introduced the printing press in 1551. The income in the early years of the university's existence was naturally very small and until 1599 it was never above £300 per annum. Additional grants were made by the Queen in May of that year and again in January and April, 1600, but even so the total income did not amount to more than £600 per annum.

Students immediately began to attend the new college in increasing numbers, and only strong Jesuit

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influence prevented Roman Catholic recusants from taking advantage of the new educational facilities.⁸⁰ For a time the Jesuits attempted to counteract the work of the new college by establishing a university of their own, but it was emphatically laid down in the Charter of Queen Elizabeth's University that "no other person should publicly profess to teach the liberal arts in any other place in Ireland without the Queen's special licence," and that licence the Jesuits were naturally unable to obtain.

Throughout the following centuries the university made continuous progress except for brief periods, during the Irish Civil War of 1641-1642, under the Commonwealth, and during James II's attempts to recover the English crown. In 1613 James I granted to the College the privilege of returning two members to the Irish Parliament, and in 1637 Charles I confirmed Elizabeth's original charter. In the Irish Act of Settlement 14 & 15 Charles II CCXIX 1660 a very important provision is to be found whereby powers were conferred for the erection of another college, to be called "King's College" within the university. We have already mentioned that the original charter referred to Trinity College as "the Mother of a University," by which it was probably intended to imply that other colleges might be the offspring of the Dublin foundation. Since education in Trinity College was, until the time of the repeal of the penal laws, entirely preserved for members of the Established faith, the possibility of a second college within the university was always borne in mind by Roman Catholics and Dissenters. This Act in 1660 could always be quoted in favour of such an interpretation, although nothing came of its provisions at the time.

Naturally enough the majority of the early graduates were destined for Holy Orders, so that in the period up to 1616 there was only one medical graduate, although one of the fellows was supposed to look after the interests of that subject. The first great medical

⁸⁰ Corcoran : op. cit p 23.

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teacher in the university was John Stearne, who became Professor of Hebrew in 1656. In 1661, with the consent of the Provost, he founded a School of Medicine known as Trinity Hall, and this institution received a Charter in 1667. The Hall was quite definitely an integral part of the University of Dublin. John Stearne had been created Professor of Medicine in the University in 1662, occupying a Chair established in 1637, all the students at Trinity Hall were also students of Trinity, and finally the President of the Hall was to be elected by the Provost, Fellows, and Scholars of Trinity College.⁸¹

The foundation of Trinity Hall is the first real landmark in the history of Irish medical science. In ancient Ireland the healing profession, like so many others, had been hereditary in certain families. In later time the traditions of the art were handed on in certain of the native schools so that Campion could write: "Without either precepts or observation of congruity they speake Latine like a vulgar language, learned in their common schools of Leach-craft and Law, whereat they begin children, and hold on sixteene or twentie years conning by roate the aphorisms of Hypocrates, and the Civil Institutions and a few other parings of these two faculties. I have seene them where they kept scholle, ten in some one chamber, grovelling upon couches of straw, their Bookes at their noses, themselves lyng flatte prostrate, and so to chaunte out their lessons by piece-meale, being the most part lustie fellows of twenty-five yeares and upwards."⁸² These recitations were usually Latinised versions of the Greek "fathers of Medicine" and the Arabian writers, but inevitably, with the suppression of these schools even their slight knowledge of medical science was lost.

Early in the fifteenth century the continental type

81 Kirkpatrick: *History of the Medical School in T.C.D.* pp. 43-44.

82 Quoted in Kenny: *Sources for the Early History of Ireland et alia.*

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of medical man—the barber-surgeon—is met with in Irish History, and in 1446 Henry VI incorporated the Fraternity of Barbers in Dublin—the first such-like guild to receive recognition in the British Isles. The Barbers' Fraternity continued to exist as a medical as well as tonsorial fraternity until it was abolished in 1840, but naturally for many years before its end no barber member had practised as a medical man. During the intervening period further charters had been granted to the Fraternity by Queen Elizabeth and by James II,⁸³ but with the establishment of the King's and Queen's College of Physicians in 1692 it lost a great deal of its importance owing to the clause in the latter's charter denying to any but its graduates the right to practise within seven miles of Dublin.⁸⁴

The Charter of 1692 which transformed Trinity Hall into the College of Physicians maintained to a large extent the existing close relationship between that institution and the university, but in 1710 a breach occurred between the two which resulted in the establishment of a medical school within the walls of Trinity College. The breach was caused by the refusal of the College of Physicians to examine a Trinity graduate for a Medical Degree because he was held to have violated a private statute of the Physicians' College.⁸⁵ Although the staffs of the two medical schools were frequently interchangeable, in the future they conferred quite different qualifications. From henceforth there was no difficulty in obtaining medical qualifications in Ireland, though until the establishment of the Queen's Colleges all the teaching was done in Dublin. By an Act 25 Geo. III c. 42 1785, three new Medical Professorships were founded in the university and Dublin began to acquire that reputation for medical teaching which she retains in the forefront of the world to-day.

⁸³ Cameron, C.: *History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland*, pp 69, 70 and 102.

⁸⁴ Kirkpatrick: *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁸⁵ Belcher: *Register of the Kings and Queens College of Physicians in Ireland* (Dublin, 1866), p. 10.

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The eighteenth century was one of remarkable intellectual stagnation in the majority of the Universities of western Europe, and although that of Dublin was not uninfluenced by this apathy, it still remained considerably more alive than those of Oxford and Cambridge. In this century graduated such great intellectual leaders as Dean Swift and Edmund Burke, and Oliver Goldsmith was numbered among the undergraduates, whilst all the great leaders of the independent Parliament of 1782-1800 had received their early education within the walls of Trinity—Grattan, Flood, Fitzgibbon, and Hussey Burgh. Finally, Wolfe Tone, leader of the United Irishmen in the Insurrection of 1798, bore witness to the intellectual ferment within the walls evidenced best in the great Historical Society founded by Edmund Burke in 1747, of which Tone, as well as Emmet, another leader in 1798, was an Auditor. During the century various Acts of Parliament established new Chairs of Oratory and History, of Natural and Experimental Philosophy, of Feudal and English Law and of Greek; many of the present buildings were erected, also through the generosity of Parliament; and the University proved a worthy intellectual centre during the time when Dublin was a well-nigh independent capital.

In Dr. Maxwell's book, "Dublin Under the Georges," she quotes from a pamphlet which outlined the courses that could be taken in Trinity in 1759. These will be seen to cover more subjects than one would expect in a period when learning was generally under a cloud, and they explain and justify Lord Chesterfield's assertion that "the Irish schools and university are indisputably better than ours." The courses included: Oriental, Ancient, and Modern Languages; Criticism; Sacred and Profane History; Oratory; Logic; Ethics and Metaphysics; Natural and Experimental Philosophy; Anatomy; Botany and Chemistry; Mathematics, theory and practice; Civil and Canon Law; Theology, Controversy and Ecclesiastical History; Newtonian Philosophy; Boyle's Experimental Phil-

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osophy and Locke's *Metaphysics*. To support this varied curriculum, the Library was looked upon as one of the best in Europe, and it contained a remarkably valuable collection of books. It had been established in 1601, when the British Army, which defeated the Spanish at Kinsale, commemorated their victory by subscribing from their arrears of pay towards the purchase of books for the public library of the University of Dublin. James Ussher and Luke Chaloner were selected as the trustees of this donation, and it is interesting to record that when they were in London in 1603 expending the money, Sir Thomas Bodley was there collecting books for his newly-erected library at Oxford. Contact was established between the representatives of the two libraries, and accordingly they were created more or less together.

The army was again responsible for the next important acquisition received by the library. In 1655 Archbishop James Ussher died, leaving behind him a magnificent collection of books and manuscripts, which, owing to straitened circumstances, his daughter, Lady Tyrrell, was forced to place upon the open market. The King of Denmark and Cardinal Mazarin both made proposals to purchase it, but Cromwell, the Lord Protector, issued an order forbidding its sale without his consent; it was thereupon purchased by the officers and soldiers of the army then in Ireland for £2,200, but Cromwell denied them the privilege of presenting it to Trinity College on the grounds that he wanted it for a new college he was going to establish in Dublin. In consequence the books did not reach Trinity College Library till after the Restoration, by which time a considerable number of the manuscripts had been stolen. From time to time various private benefactors made munificent contributions to the library, and as well since the year 1801 it has been entitled to a copy of every book printed in the British Isles.

Until 1793 the University was open only to members of the Established Church. In its earliest days recusants and dissenters attended in small numbers, but oaths

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were later introduced which could not, with any self-respect, be taken by these persons. We have referred in a previous chapter to some of the outstanding Roman Catholics who took the opportunity of the education afforded to them by the "Act for the Relief of His Majesty's Popish or Roman Catholic Subjects in Ireland 1793," but at first they were not admitted to the rank of Scholar, nor were they permitted to compete for the prizes offered. It was not until 1873 that the Provostship, Fellowships, and Foundation Scholarships were thrown open to persons of any or no religion. The Fellows, except two, until the middle of the nineteenth century were compelled to be in Holy Orders, and for a considerable period were also required to be celibate. All such restrictions, tests, and disabilities have now been removed.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the history of the University has been one of continuous progress and advance. Dublin was the first University in the British Isles to recognise Engineering and Dentistry as University faculties; she was the first of the three sister foundations (Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin) to admit women to her graduate body; and naturally many new Professorships and Faculties have been created. In 1893 the Tercentenary of the Foundation of the University was celebrated, and representatives of practically every University and learned body in the world assembled in Dublin to do her honour. The twentieth century has seen the resources of her great library strained to the utmost and the numbers of her student body achieve remarkable dimensions.

The University of Dublin was at all times more particularly the University of the Established Church. There were in consequence many attempts on the part of interested persons to establish Universities or University Colleges on a broader basis which would cater for every section of Irish religious life. Orde's plan of provincial colleges, which might have developed into University Colleges, has already been referred to, not so the attempts made to establish a University at

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Armagh "to conciliate and soften down the minds of our various sectaries in the North of Ireland." In 1794 the great Primate Robinson, Lord Rokeby, died, leaving the sum of £5,000 towards the foundation of this University. During his lifetime he had practically rebuilt the entire city of Armagh, and as well he established in that city a library and an observatory which are still justly famous. Evidently he had intended these to be integral parts of the University scheme he had in mind. Attached to this legacy there was the proviso that the University should be established within five years. That it was not is partially the result of remarkably curious reasoning. The Duke of Portland vetoed the scheme because "it was not desirable to stimulate Dublin University by the emulation of a second University, as the students of Trinity College were already apt to injure their health by overwork." Surely a magnificent tribute to the quantity if not the quality of the work done in Trinity.

The plan of the projected university is still in existence to-day. To obtain financial support the endowments of the five Royal Schools were to be pooled and re-allocated in the following proportions:

One Quarter to the five headmasters, who were, according to the standards of the times and the amount of work they did, grossly overpaid.

One Quarter to the professors and scholars of the University of Armagh.

One Quarter to the maintenance of the students at Armagh.

One Quarter to buildings, etc.

It was intended that the Dean of Armagh should act as Provost, his salary as heretofore coming from the profits of the Deanery. The Librarian and the Astronomer were to be the first two fellows, and as such should be paid a salary of £150 per annum. As well there were to be five junior fellows receiving salaries of £50 per annum. The professorships to be established were to be those of Classical Learning and History; Mathematics and Experimental Philo-

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sophy ; Moral Philosophy and Law ; Anglican Divinity and Dissenting Divinity. Forty scholars were to be elected at a stipend of £25 per year, of whom twenty were to be from the five Royal Schools and the other twenty from Dissenting Schools. The fellows were to be appointed after examination on a vote of the majority of the professors. Dissenters were to be eligible for every appointment except that of Provost, which as it was attached to the Deanery could only be held by an Anglican clergyman. The Visitors of the University were to be the Lord Primate and one of his northern colleagues on the Episcopal Bench, and in order that graduates of the university might attain promotion in the Church the government was to present to the university the patronage of two livings in each northern diocese, and each Bishop was to present one. Unfortunately whether it was because of the Duke of Portland's reason or no, the university never came into being and the Dissenters of Northern Ireland had to continue to cross over to Scotland if they acquired any university education at all.⁸⁶

Whilst the Dissenters had not experienced the full force of the Penal Laws, they had suffered under serious educational disabilities, particularly as regards higher education. Fortunately for the Northern Presbyterians they were frequently under the protection of distinguished noblemen whose Scottish antecedents attached them to the Presbyterian cause. Thus James Hamilton, one of the three original Fellows of Trinity College, was afterwards created Viscount Clandeboy and naturally gave his protection to his Presbyterian co-religionists as settlers and teachers in County Down. Some of these teachers taught Languages and Philosophy in Connor in 1667 ; and John Lowe had established a Divinity School in Antrim in 1672 under the protection of Lord Massareene ; as well James McAlpin founded an Academy and Philosophy School at Killy-

⁸⁶ *The Book of the Royal Academical Institution, Belfast*, pp. 24 ff reproduces Pelham's plan.

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leagh in 1697 at which he educated Francis Hutcheson, who afterwards as a professor in Glasgow University acted as teacher of Adam Smith. Naturally these schools and teachers looked to the Scottish Universities for their inspiration, and it was in that country that any of their students obtained what little university education they possessed. Since everyone was not in a position to afford the journey and the time, there were, during the eighteenth century, grave complaints regarding the low intellectual level of the Nonconformist clergy. Of some it was stated that they only spent five months in the study of theology, and of others, that, although graduates in arts, they had never attended a Divinity lecture at all. When the Belfast Academy was opened in 1716 the Killyleagh Presbytery gave it a contribution of 100 guineas in the hopes that it might in due course develop into a centre of collegiate education, but they were unfortunately disappointed. Towards the end of the century some attempt was made by Dr. Crawford of Strabane to establish a Presbyterian Clerical Seminary, and the qualifications granted by it were recognised by the Synod of Ulster as the equivalent of a university degree. There were three professors of Arts and Theology at this institution, which had but a short existence.

In 1814 the Royal Academical Institution, Belfast, was opened to the general public, and until the establishment of the Queen's Colleges in 1850 it provided as well as a secondary education, the only higher education to be obtained in Ulster. Although it educated some very distinguished scholars it naturally suffered from its inability to confer degrees and consequently until 1845 the Presbyterians of Northern Ireland, despite urgent representations on their behalf to successive British governments, were without the advantages of university education.

As we have shown when discussing the influence of Sir Thomas Wyse, the question of providing opportunities for higher education to persons of all classes and denominations in centres outside Dublin occupied

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the frequent attention of many leading public men. The introduction by the government of proposals to establish Queen's Colleges in Cork, Galway, and Belfast was hailed with joy and enthusiasm by the great majority of the Irish people who had knowledge of their significance, but when the Queen's Colleges opened in 1849 and the Queen's University of Ireland was incorporated in 1850 the prospect had become very gloomy. The opposition of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy to the "godless" character of the new colleges led to the enrolment being considerably below what had been anticipated, and those who benefited most were the Protestant middle classes who were quick to seize their opportunities, especially and very naturally in the College at Belfast. That college either as a constituent college of the Queen's University of Ireland, or under the Royal University, or finally as an independent entity has ever since pursued a progressive and enlightened policy justifying its intellectual leadership of the province of Ulster. Particularly in its medical and scientific faculties has it acquired a reputation both well-deserved and world-wide. Its student body has always been large and it has met with well-merited support from the citizens of Northern Ireland.

The Irish University question had not been settled as long as Roman Catholic students did not feel themselves adequately catered for. In 1854 the Roman Catholic Hierarchy established, in Dublin, an institution known as the Catholic University of Ireland, to serve as a focus of higher education and as preventive of any too great enrolment of their co-religionists at either Trinity College or the Queen's Colleges, both of which, although declared dangerous to faith and morals, had always an appreciable minority of Roman Catholic students. That distinguished convert from the Anglican Church, John Henry, later Cardinal Newman, was appointed first President, and the college which was established in Stephen's Green was provided with an ample revenue from the Irish people in its

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earliest years. Nevertheless it was never a great success. As it was not a state-recognised corporation it could not of course confer degrees. Newman, though keenly interested in educational problems, and a voluminous writer thereon, was so thoroughly an Englishman that he could never understand either the Irish temperament or the attitude in Ireland of the Roman Catholic Church. After his resignation the college very nearly died a natural death and when the college was made over by the Bishops to the Jesuit order there were practically no students in it at all. Those who did complete their college course and were alive at the establishment of the National University were enrolled by that university upon its list of graduates.

In 1882 the Queen's University was dissolved and the Royal University was established. This new creation was merely an examining body, but it had the advantage over the previous university that its Fellowships were open to any scholars including those of the Catholic University. Accordingly the Roman Catholic Church was partially satisfied since graduates of its college in Dublin could proceed to degrees of the Royal University without feeling at any serious disadvantage to their Protestant fellow-countrymen. The situation was however still very unsatisfactory. A purely examining body does not inspire in its graduates either great affection or great loyalty, nor does it inculcate any considerable measure of what we may call culture. As well, the Catholic University College in Dublin was only indirectly assisted financially by the government, through the payment of salaries as Fellows of the University to certain of the Professors, whereas the Queen's Colleges of course received considerable state assistance. A final settlement was attempted in 1909. In that year the Royal University was replaced by two bodies: The National University of Ireland and the Queen's University of Belfast. The latter was merely the Queen's College of Belfast right worthily transformed into an autonomous university; the former was once again a federal university consis-

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ting of constituent colleges at Cork, Galway, and Dublin.

The one outstanding contribution made by the Royal University to Irish educational history lay in the fact that it granted its degrees to any qualified person not merely irrespective of religion but also irrespective of sex. By the close of the century a steady stream of women graduates came forth to raise the standards of female education. From the teaching point of view Alexandra College, Dublin, opened in 1866, provided the requisite training for the greater percentage of these graduates. When Trinity College opened its doors to women it was vainly hoped that Alexandra might be deservedly admitted as a constituent college of the University of Dublin; but despite the manifest advantages inherent in such a proposition it was not to be. As a result, since Alexandra is no longer required to deliver lectures of the standards requisite to the acquisition of the university degree considerable changes in its aims and aspirations have perforce taken place in the twentieth century. When it was founded in 1866 the college was one of the pioneers in the cause of female education; from 1881-1909 the courses pursued were such as to qualify students for the highest honours in the Royal University, thereafter since the majority of Protestant women students proceeded directly to Trinity for their degrees, Alexandra developed in importance its housecraft and secretarial departments. The only important department which remained for any considerable period from old university days was that for the training of secondary and kindergarten teachers, which, established in 1905, worked for a time in close association with the School of Education in Trinity College. The Secondary Training department has now been given up, but that for kindergarten teaching is still continued in conjunction with Alexandra School.

Alexandra College made in its earliest years a remarkable contribution to the cause of feminine education, and it was due to the influence and ability of its alumnae

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that in 1877 the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, in 1882 the Royal University, and in 1904 Trinity College permitted the acquisition of their qualifications by women.

The National University of Ireland marked a distinct break with the previous university tradition. Approved by the Hierarchy, it quickly became Roman Catholic in all but name, and it provided higher education for an entirely new section of the Irish people. It early made the preservation and revival of the Irish language and culture one of its first concerns, and Irish became a compulsory subject at entrance for all native-born citizens. Since the establishment of the Irish Free State strenuous efforts have been made to make University College, Galway, a purely Gaelic University with all instruction carried on through the medium of that tongue. The number of professors and faculties has naturally expanded with the needs of the time. The original Queen's University conferred degrees in Arts, Medicine and Law, but to these must now be added Commerce, Music, Dentistry, Agriculture and Science, and as well diplomas are granted in many other subjects, but particularly in education. The School of Education, as in Trinity College, has become of increasing importance as a higher standard is demanded of members of the teaching profession.

To the National University is affiliated the great Roman Catholic College of St. Patrick, Maynooth, where the great majority of that Church's clergy receive their education. The time has long disappeared when a Bishop of Limerick could assert that out of 118 clergy in his diocese only six possessed university degrees! The students of Maynooth as well as pursuing in that college their theological studies, also proceed to their arts and science degrees at the National University. From its foundation the Royal College of St. Patrick was ever a constant care to the British government, who saw in the Roman Catholic clergy a useful means for controlling the country. A yearly grant was paid by the Treasury towards its upkeep, a grant which

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in the period 1844-69 amounted to £26,000 per annum. For its termination in the latter year the college received £372,000 in compensation. In the period 1800-1871 a lay college was associated with the ecclesiastical seminary, but in the latter year it was done away with as the students were not considered a good influence on the budding ecclesiastics.

Maynooth was established in 1795 but it was not until 1853 that the Irish Presbyterian Church was provided with a theological college. In 1865 the Belfast College was followed by the foundation of the Magee College, Londonderry, which offered a training both in arts and theology whereas that in Belfast, being in close proximity to one of the Queen's Colleges, offered theology only. As long as the Queen's and Royal Universities of Ireland continued to exist students of Magee could proceed to degrees in those institutions, but when the Royal was dissolved in 1908, Magee was temporarily without any university affiliation. After negotiations with both Belfast and Trinity, arrangements were made with the latter whereby students of Magee spent a part of their academic life in attendance at the University of Dublin, and taking certain examinations there obtained degrees from that institution. As a result north-west Ireland is fortunate in possessing an excellent university college which although Presbyterian in government is open to all denominations.

It but remains to mention the Royal College of Science founded in Dublin in 1867 and associated with the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction after 1900. Subsequent to the establishment of the Irish Free State it was associated with University College, Dublin, and has become part of the scientific department of that College. Similarly the government agricultural farm at Glasnevin has been associated with the National University, and in Northern Ireland a similar college has been established in connection with Queen's University, Belfast. Agriculture is also catered for extensively at University College, Cork, whose school of Dairy Science is acquiring an inter-

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national reputation. Whilst it is still none too easy for the student without means to obtain a university education, at least no section of the community is barred from such by other than economic or intellectual considerations. Furthermore as the century progresses both national and local governments are expending greater sums on the provision of scholarships and assistance to those who without such help could not possibly afford the expense of prolonged higher education. It is now well within the bounds of possibility that a person of outstanding ability might pass through his entire school and college course at no cost whatsoever to his parents or himself. The Irish universities provide opportunities which are daily being availed of to the full by all classes of the community.

Recommended for further reading :

Dixon, W. M. : *Trinity College, Dublin* London, 1902.

Kirkpatrick, T. P. C. : *History of the Medical School in T.C.D.* Dublin, 1912.

Cameron, Charles : *History of the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland.* Dublin, 1916.

Stockley, W. F. P. : *Newman and Education in Ireland.* London, 1933.

A Page of Irish History Story of University College, Dublin, 1883-1909. Dublin, 1930.

CHAPTER VI

RECENT EDUCATIONAL HISTORY⁸⁷

THE establishment of the Board of Commissioners of National Education in 1831 did not meet with that unmixed satisfaction which we might have expected. Nor did the opposition come from representatives of the Roman Catholic Church alone. Within the bounds of all three Churches which catered for the spiritual welfare of the Irish people there were strong parties for and against the scheme outlined by Mr. Stanley. Particularly obnoxious to the Presbyterians was the provision that religious instruction could only be given during recognised periods and not at whatever time the teacher or the local minister thought fit. A section of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy had no objection to the unannotated reading of the scriptures, but in time this section was silenced. Finally the Church of Ireland naturally had no desire to give up its privileged position, especially when that position could be supported by a convinced opinion in favour of its solitary righteousness. Nevertheless, despite a great deal of public agitation the Board strained every nerve to establish a countrywide series of non-denominational schools. That they had a great opportunity can be realised when it is remembered that in 1812 it was computed that there were at least 4,600 schools in the country with over 200,000 pupils, and by 1826 those figures had increased enormously to 12,000 schools with over 500,000 pupils. These schools

⁸⁷ The statistics provided in this chapter are taken from the *Reports* of the various departments responsible for Irish Education, and will in the main be found summarised in the first reports presented by the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland Departments of Education.

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were in general pay schools of the old hedge type, and a large proportion of the teachers were naturally taken over by the National Board once the requisite conditions had been fulfilled.

Statistics regarding Irish schools in 1824 are contained as follows in Balfour's *Educational Systems of Great Britain and Ireland*, page 79.

<i>Societies</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Pupils on the Books</i>
Kildare Place Society	919	58,205
London Hibernian Society	618	37,507
Assoc. for Discountenancing Vice	226	12,769
Erasmus Smith Foundation	113	8,882
Baptist Society	32	2,210
Schools of other Societies	123	7,155
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	2,119	131,105
<i>Less</i> Schools included under two headings	392	25,093
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,727	106,012
 <i>Roman Catholic Schools</i>		
R.C. Day Schools	352	33,529
Nunnery ('Girls') Schools	46	7,136
The Christian Brothers	25	5,454
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	422	46,119
Maintained by individuals	322	13,688
"Pay" Schools	9,352	394,732
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	11,823	560,549

It can accordingly be seen that there was no lack of scholastic establishments awaiting the aid and support of the National Board. The most important other question therefore for the Board was the supplying of trained teachers to the schools. Dr. J. F. Murray,

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one of the earliest inspectors under the Board, commented as follows in February, 1833: "The ignorance of the teachers, generally speaking, is another barrier to improvement. To an arrogance and self-conceitedness peculiarly their own, many of the country schoolmasters and mistresses unite an ignorance of anything except reading and writing, with occasionally a smattering of mathematics. I found few who knew anything of English grammar; fewer still who were acquainted with geography. However I might lament the limited extent of their information, I could not but regret the wretched judgment displayed in communicating the little they do know."⁸⁸

The Kildare Place Society had established the first Model School in Dublin, but it refused to come under the administration of the National Board because of the non-denominational character of the latter's foundation. In 1833 therefore, the Board opened a model school and a three-months' course for the training of teachers was instituted. The school was transferred in 1835 to the site in Marlborough Street which it continues to occupy, but up to 1842 provision was made only for the training of men teachers. In the latter year Tyrone House was opened for women, and in 1843 the course was extended to last five months. Despite the opportunities thus accorded, the great majority of the teachers continued to have no training whatsoever, and it was noted with dismay in 1883 that no less than 60 per cent. of grant-receiving teachers were untrained. As a result the Board decided on a new policy whereby grants were paid to non-state training colleges, of a denominational character, as long as such colleges pursued courses approved by the Board. Under this scheme the Church of Ireland Training College in Kildare Place was re-established, and has ever since continued to provide the necessary qualifications for the great majority of Irish Protestant teachers. By 1922 there were seven Training Colleges in full working order, of which five catered exclusively

88 Balfour, *Educational Systems, etc* p. 92.

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for Roman Catholic students, one for Protestant students, and one, the original, was non-denominational. By that date the course had been considerably extended in length, to ten months in 1874, and to its present length of two years in 1884. Exemptions from certain sections of the course were granted to university graduates, especially if they held the Higher Diploma in Education. Several of the Training Colleges became in some measure associated with the universities, and it was made possible for students to proceed to university degrees, the possession of which was recognised by bonuses from the National Board.

The training colleges supplied, and continue to supply, excellent teachers well-qualified for the task they have taken in hand. But there were certain other ways of joining the ranks of the teaching profession. Until quite recently a certain proportion of pupil teachers were admitted to take the lower classes in primary schools, and they might remain all their lives in the lower grades of the profession. At one period quite a number of model schools were opened all over the country for the training of such pupil teachers, but although the title "model school" still remains, this function has been taken away from them. The failure of the model schools, which numbered 30 in 1867, was mainly due to the attitude taken up by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, who were against "the principles upon which such schools are established, inasmuch as they tend to throw into the hands of the State, acting through a body of Commissioners, the education of the country and the formation of masters and mistresses of the rising generation." The National Board had originally intended that there should be one model school in each county, but when this opposition developed no more were built and in the end the denominational policy of 1884 was adopted. A third class of teacher in the schools was that of Junior Assistant Mistress, who was a person who had passed the necessary examination for entrance to a training college but had not proceeded to training. When

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teachers were paid according to the inspector's classifications those classes who had not the benefit of a training college education naturally found it at times impossible and generally almost impossible to qualify for the highest rates. In the Irish Free State it is still possible for a small proportion of teachers to be appointed each year who have qualified only through possessing a university degree or as members of religious orders. For the period 1855-1883 it was impossible for a clergyman or member of a religious order to be a national school teacher, but these prohibitions did not apply to nuns.

1883 marks a watershed in the policy of the National Board. For some time it had been realised on all sides that the policy of non-denominationalism was a failure. The Presbyterians had established their own schools in the North rather than be prevented from reading the Scriptures at any time, and there had been a marked tendency throughout the country for all education to proceed along denominational lines. In 1883 the Board gave way and henceforth the policy of Archbishop MacHale triumphed. A deep gulf was fixed between the Roman Catholic and Protestant National Schools until they almost seemed instead of a stone's throw to be centuries apart.

At first the National Board had no scheme of school inspection and it was some time before one was developed. In the period 1872-1900 a great effort was made through the system of inspection to improve the standard of instruction in the schools and teachers' salaries were increased by what were known as "results, fees" paid in recognition of their work based on the inspectors' examination and estimate. It is generally agreed that in its earliest years this system worked well and the whole standard of knowledge was quickly raised to a considerable degree, but education soon became so formalised as to present other and more serious defects and there were few regrets when the system was abolished in 1900. Whilst there is naturally at all times a considerable amount of complaint at

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he salary rates which are still far from attracting the best brains to either the primary or secondary branches of the profession there has however been a distinct improvement in the scale during the present century, although at present the rates in Northern Ireland are appreciably above those in the Irish Free State.

The Board of National Education, whose membership varied in number from seven in 1831 to twenty in the concluding period of its history, soon became so overburdened with the work of directing its thousands of schools that almost entire power passed into the hands of an official known as the Resident Commissioner. The Board itself meeting fortnightly and attended by the outstanding public men of the Ireland of each generation who naturally were busy in a hundred and one other ways, was compelled to delegate its power largely to paid officials. Except for the restraint financially exercised by the Treasury, the Board and its servants were subject to no government control. An essentially bureaucratic system was developed and centralised subject to no regular popular control whether local or parliamentary. The only connection between the teachers and the State was in the receipt of the former's salaries. Their appointment and dismissal lay entirely in the hands of the managers subject to a certain controlling power exercised by the Board. Such an educational system was naturally unique and was the inevitable response to the peculiar religious circumstances in Ireland. The duty of the State to provide education for all was balanced against the claim of the Church to control all such education and the resulting compromise was effected. The only power exercised by the Board was through the handling of the financial weapon, in every other respect the authority of the local clerical manager and of the Bishop of the diocese was of more importance. Such a situation had not been the original aim of the National Board, but it had to give way before the organised might of the Irish Roman Catholic Church.

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We have previously referred to the attempts made in the "Hedge Schools" to enforce the disuse of the Irish language for purely economic reasons. The Irish people looked on the establishment of the National Schools as providing a glorious opportunity to further the anglicisation of their children, and it was not until 1879 that there was a sufficient demand for Irish to be included as a possible extra subject to be taught, on payment of a small fee, outside school hours. There were several subjects of such a nature, including French and Latin. The foundation under Douglas Hyde in 1893 of the Gaelic League which aimed at the preservation and cultivation of the Irish language, traditions, and history, gave impetus to the study of Irish which was recognised by the National Board in 1900, when they permitted Irish to be taught inside school hours. Although in that year only 100 out of 8,000 National Schools taught Irish as an extra subject, the fees paid for the teaching of Irish out of school hours increased from £2,000 a year in 1901 to £12,000 a year in 1905, and to £21,000 a year in 1921. After 1906 bilingual schools were established in the Irish speaking districts known as the Gaeltacht, and there were 239 of these in 1921. The Government provided Irish courses in order to train the requisite teachers.

Parallel to the steady development in the quality of the work done in the primary schools during the nineteenth century there was no similar improvement in the secondary schools. The majority of the endowed schools to which we have referred continued to exist with increasing enrolments, but as we have shown, they catered for but a small section of the community. The remainder, if they desired any higher education, were served by isolated and independent secondary schools established by the whim of private individuals wherever there was any possibility of commercial success. There were a few Roman Catholic secondary schools, of better reputation than those established under duly recognised authorities. Of these were the college at Carlow founded in 1793; Clongowes

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Wood, a Jesuit school founded in 1814; and St. Jarlath's, Tuam, founded in 1817. The majority of those who aspired to higher education did not receive it at schools of the calibre of these.

In the middle of the century the standard of secondary education was so low that President Berwick of Queen's College, Galway, was forced to say: "The fact is, that if we rejected candidates who were not sufficiently prepared to enter on our curriculum, we would reject eight out of ten." Some of his professors made equally critical remarks. The Professor of Modern Languages is quoted as saying: "I have to give elementary lectures in the French class and also in the German class. Very few of the students who come up ever saw a French word in their lives." Professor D'Arcy Thompson, who held the Chair of Greek, complained that he was a schoolmaster and not a professor. "During the past three years I have had the management of an alpha-beta class one fourth part of my professional duties."⁸⁸

Of course the situation was considerably worse in the neighbourhood of Galway than around the two other Queen's Colleges. Connaught was unquestionably the poorest of the provinces. With the establishment of the National Board the old Irish classical schools disappeared from existence and there was little chance of the new teachers—except in isolated circumstances—being in a position to prepare young people for college. Many of the Roman Catholic Bishops established diocesan seminaries, and the schools of the Christian Brothers often developed secondary departments, but the teaching was too often of a very inferior kind, chiefly because of the low standard of secular education which still prevailed in the clerical ranks. As late as 1901 the Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick pointed out this grave defect in the education of his clergy, of whom he asserted only 6 out of 118 had University degrees. The natural result was that the seminaries were perforce staffed by persons without any higher

89 O'Donnell, F. H. : *The Ruin of Education in Ireland*, p. 20.

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education, other than theological. If there was a vacancy the Bishop usually chose the ablest of the young men just ordained to fill it. "But," declared the Bishop of Limerick, "they come out of Maynooth absolutely deficient in all classical education and in all scientific and mathematical education, and above all deficient in that undefinable thing that is not knowledge but culture . . . I would not find among the priests of my diocese a single man who was competent to teach the schoolboys in my school the very elements of either Chemistry, Botany, Physics, or any of the natural sciences." ⁹⁰ So difficult was it to find properly qualified teachers that Protestant masters were often to be found on the staff of some of these Roman Catholic schools, and at the same time, owing to the insecurity of the tenure of these posts, a very small proportion of Roman Catholic laymen adopted the teaching profession as a career. Obviously so long as a cleric could be obtained to carry out the duties of an appointment, he would be preferred, as claiming a lower salary, to a layman, who might have a wife and family to support. This situation still closes the door to secondary teaching as a career for any large proportion of Irish Roman Catholic laymen. There are to-day in the Irish Free State only two schools staffed by lay members of that Church. All other headmasterships and the majority of the masterships are reserved either for priests in Holy Orders or for brethren of some religious fraternity. The situation in secondary schools for girls is precisely the same.

In 1878 the Government for the first time took an interest in the organisation of Irish secondary education ; and a Board was set up to disburse a Government grant to be awarded as the result of yearly examinations. The Board, which was unpaid, was chiefly the Government's agent in allocating the money, and until 1900 had no power to inspect the schools, or in any way to interfere with their internal administration. Its sole influence in Irish educational policy lay in the fact

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that it laid down the programme to be followed if its examinations were to be passed. Whilst the system of results fees cannot in the long run be defended, it once again performed a great work in Irish education, and by 1903 there were no less than 262 grant-aided secondary schools, of which 147 were for boys, 83 for girls, and two mixed. In the same year there were under the National Board, 8,721 schools with 726,552 pupils on the roll. No one could say that the Irish youth did not have the opportunity to obtain some education. In fact the proportion of young people obtaining a secondary education, 6/1,000, was higher than that in England, where it was only 5/1,000. Despite this, however, secondary education was in a far from flourishing state. The Government grants, especially in schools directly connected with the Church, were often spent on non-educational objects and no attempt was made to check this expenditure, so foreign to the original purpose of the 1878 Act, until after 1905. Then, too, the salaries were still extraordinarily low. Two inspectors, Dale and Stephens, who in 1905 made a report on the Irish Intermediate Education presented statistics showing that for men the average in seventy schools was £82 *bs.* 7*d.* per year, and it is reasonable to assume that these were not the worst-paid schools. The average in forty-seven women's schools was only £48 2*s.* 7*d.* per year. Results fees were paid on the attainments in the four different grades of the examinations supervised by the Intermediate Board. The total grant for the year was awarded in proportions varying according to the number of recipients, and in 1904 was allocated as follows :

	<i>Pass</i>			<i>Honours</i>		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Preparatory Grade .	5	16	0	12	1	0
Junior Grade .	8	14	0	13	1	0
Middle Grade	17	8	0	26	2	0
Senior Grade .	26	2	0	39	3	0

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It can thus be seen that large schools could obtain quite a considerable amount of money, and evidently passed on but a small proportion of it to the members of their staff.

The principal result of the low salaries paid to assistants was that very few possessed university degrees. In 1904 the proportion of Roman Catholic men teachers who were graduates was only 11.5 per cent., while that of Protestants was 55.8 per cent. In the case of women there were fewer opportunities of university education and only 8 per cent. of Roman Catholic women teachers and 30 per cent. of Protestant had obtained degrees. No serious attempt was made to alter this state of affairs until 1914, when Chief Secretary Birrell secured the authorisation of an annual grant of £40,000 to be disbursed to secondary teachers having regard to qualifications, experience and length of service. A Registry of secondary teachers was set up, and at various dates since, the qualifications for service have been revised and strengthened. It is now becoming almost impossible for a person to be a recognised teacher in an authorised secondary school without the possession not merely of a University degree, but also of a University Higher Diploma in Education. Possession of the latter is essential before admission to the Teachers Registry in the Irish Free State, although it is not yet obligatory in Northern Ireland. With the improvement in teachers' standards of education there has been a consequent livening of interest in the subject of teaching on the part of the universities, and the schools of education from which come the larger proportion of teachers taking up Irish appointments to-day have become amongst the larger and more influential schools in the universities. No longer can the low standard of ability in the teaching profession be saddled with the educational shortcomings of the coming generation. The schools of the future are more likely to suffer from centralised control by bureaucratic methods of departmental regimentation than through any individual weaknesses on the part of their staffs.

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Technical education was not established on an organised basis in Ireland until the beginning of the present century. Isolated technical schools had sprung up during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and one of them, the Municipal Technical College of Belfast, with an enrolment of over 7,000, and with some of its departments working in collaboration with the Queen's University, has acquired a reputation second to none. However, it was not until 1899 that any Government interest was shown in this type of education. In that year an annual grant of £50,000 was authorised for the support of such schools, and it was to be supplemented by small fees to be charged to the students and by the proceeds of a rate, not exceeding 2d. in the pound, which the county or city council of the area concerned might levy. The managership of the schools was entrusted to committees of the city or county councils who were in the long run the supreme governing bodies. The courses provided in the schools naturally varied according to the area. In the county, attention would be given to certain mechanical aspects of farming, and in the city the various trades indigenous to the area would naturally be taught. As a natural consequence of this principle the Belfast College became famous for its courses in the different trades associated with ship-building. Though the majority of the courses had a definite professional aim in view, several of the schools supplied courses in what, for want of a better term, we may call cultural education. It can be realised, therefore, that in a large technical school the curriculum was varied and extensive, and often included : electrical and mechanical engineering ; physics ; chemistry ; art ; building and printing trades ; commerce ; domestic economy ; psychology ; wireless telegraphy ; carpentry ; foreign languages and many other subjects. The courses are given principally in the evenings, as the majority of the students are engaged in some trade or profession during the day. The majority of the staff have nowadays received some special training in the teaching of the subjects for which they

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are employed. This training is generally provided through summer schools under the auspices of the Departments of Education. Teachers of subjects like art and domestic economy have, of course, qualified in special schools.

Opportunities are, of course, made for specialised study and training in subjects not sufficiently dealt with in the universities and schools, and as well there are many educational bodies specialising in the preparation of students for particular examinations. These latter institutions have but an ephemeral existence and are largely dependent on the personality of the founder. Rarely do they develop into duly recognised secondary schools. In the earlier class there are such institutions as the Royal Irish Academy of Music, and the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art. The former is a purely private institution and supplements the more advanced music teaching in the universities; the latter is under the control of the Free State Government Department of Education and has had an interesting history. It is the lineal descendant of a "little academy or school for drawing and painting" founded by the Royal Dublin Society in 1746. In 1849 it was brought under Government control and administered by the Board of Trade. In 1854 it was transferred to the care of the Department of Science and Art, and in 1900 it was once again transferred, this time to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Education. It provides a training not only in painting and sculpture but also in industrial design. The College is to-day being given an increased importance in the life of the country.

When speaking of education in Ireland it is impossible to overlook the important part played in the promotion of all educational endeavours by the Royal Dublin Society. Not only was the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art an offshoot of its energies, but the National Library in Dublin was originally the Society's library, and the Society makes yearly grants towards scientific and agricultural research and has frequently given

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hospitality to distinguished educational lecturers from foreign lands.

The partition of Ireland in 1921 and the consequent establishment of two different departments controlling education, North and South of the Border, not only created new problems but also gave the Irish people an opportunity to carry on unhampered the work of educational progress and reform. As the struggle for national independence and the consequent civil war had produced widely divergent types of patriotic Irish thought, so it provided an opportunity to two quite distinct types of educational theory being put into practice within the bounds of a single small island. The Provisional Government of the Irish Free State early showed the direction which education was to take south of the Border when, on the 1st of February, 1922, it issued an order that on or after the subsequent 17th of March (St. Patrick's Day—the festival of Ireland's national saint) at least one hour a day was to be devoted either to the teaching of the Irish language or to teaching through the medium of Irish, wherever any member of the school staff was sufficiently qualified. The attitude of the Government of Northern Ireland on this question can be realised when it is recalled that those grants formerly paid by the Commissioners of National Education for the teaching of the Irish language are in that territory paid no longer.

It took several years before the new educational system was in full working order, and this was in large part due to the uncoordinated nature of the educational system under the previous Government. The various types of scholastic institutions were under the control of five different Boards and Departments :

1. The Commissioners of National Education administered Primary Education.
2. The Commissioners of Intermediate Education administered Secondary Education.
3. The Commissioners of Education in Ireland were

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responsible for the administration of the schemes governing the Endowed Schools.

4. The Department of Reformatory and Industrial Schools existed as an independent unit.
5. The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction controlled all branches of Technical Education.

These five different organisations were coalesced in both North and South into Departments of Education presided over by Ministers who were members of their respective cabinets.

The Free State Department of Education took immediate steps to establish the Irish language in a position co-equal with English, as accorded to it in the Constitution. Gradually the study of Irish was made compulsory, firstly as a subject in the primary schools, and later as a requisite for all State appointments. Summer schools were held under Government supervision so that teachers might become thoroughly acquainted with the new subject in the school curriculum, and bonuses were paid to those secondary teachers who could teach through the medium of Irish and to those schools where such teaching took place. Finally since even in the Irish-speaking Gaeltacht the language was losing ground, still for economic reasons, Government grants were paid to those families, having children under fourteen years of age, in whose homes the Irish language was that commonly used. In their vigorous attempts to revivify the national language and culture the Government have shown themselves ready to sacrifice educational standards in other subjects. The curriculum of the National Schools, which since 1896 had been steadily widened to include such subjects as manual instruction, drawing, elementary science, cookery, singing, drill and needlework, has perforce been lightened of recent years to make way for the intensified study of the new compulsory subject. The shortage of teachers entering the preparatory and

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training schools with an adequate knowledge of Irish has led the Government to reserve a certain proportion of places for persons living in the Gaeltacht, who are accordingly often successful in examinations at which their names appear near the end of the list, and even the unsuccessful are rewarded with financial grants denied to candidates from English-speaking areas, so that they may present themselves a second time.

To ensure in the new primary teachers a thorough mastery of the Irish language, preparatory colleges were established into which would-be national teachers are admitted about the age of 14. In these preparatory colleges, which were established in 1927, a four years' course based on the secondary school programme is pursued, and the passing of the secondary schools' senior leaving certificate is essential in order to enter the training colleges. These preparatory schools do all their work through the medium of Irish, and that language is also the one supposed to be used in private conversation, games, etc.

The majority of advances made in the Irish Free State educational services during the past few years have been equalled by those in Northern Ireland. In both, the Schools Attendance Acts have been revised, as they were working most unsuccessfully, prior to the change of Government. In both, school medical and dental services have been introduced, but to a much greater degree in Northern Ireland owing to its superior financial position. A greater interest is being shown in physical training in the schools on both sides of the Border, and both Departments have established a Primary Schools' Certificate awarded to those passing the requisite examinations at the end of their primary school career. The former three grades of the Intermediate Board's Certificate have been reduced to two: the Senior and Junior Leaving Certificates. By the Schools Attendance Act of 1926 the Free State Minister for Education is empowered to compel the attendance of children at post-primary education up to the age of 16; but no attempt has been made to carry this

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provision into effect on a nation-wide scale. The other important enactment dealing with education is the Vocational Education Act of 1930, which supplements the Technical Instruction already in existence and which may some day be used to implement the provision regarding the raising of the school-leaving age included in the Act of 1926.

The Government of Northern Ireland has pursued an entirely different educational policy to that of the Government of the Irish Free State. The latter has consistently placed cultural nationalisation in the forefront of its educational ideals, the Northern Government has as consistently emphasised the economic value and importance of education. The Free State continued the system of managerial government of the primary schools inherited from their predecessors, thereby insuring the continued domination of the ecclesiastical interest. In Northern Ireland, by the Education Act of 1923, education was democratised and a decentralised system of local control established. The local education authority is the county or borough council, acting through its educational committee or regional education committees. It is hoped that ultimately all primary and the majority of secondary schools will be brought under the control of these bodies, who are responsible for the appointment and dismissal of teachers, for the provision of scholarships from primary to secondary schools, for medical and dental care, and for the feeding and clothing of the poor. As well they are empowered to enforce that section of the Act dealing with compulsory attendance, and it is their duty to see that religious instruction is imparted to the children. However, the various Churches, very naturally wishful to preserve their former privileged positions, put many difficulties in the way of the successful operation of this Act. With isolated exceptions no Roman Catholic school has placed itself under the control of any regional committee, although provision is made in the Act for the preservation of the religious affiliations of the various schools. Those

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schools who prefer to remain under the managerial system are permitted to do so, but are at a serious financial disadvantage.

The most important result of the new Act has been the almost complete replacement, in the case of transferred schools, of insanitary, unhygienic, and worn-out school buildings by magnificent buildings of the most up-to-date scholastic type. Northern Ireland can truly and deservedly claim that in the sphere of school architecture she is well up to the standard of the outstanding countries in Europe. Not only have old schools been replaced, but many have been amalgamated and established in new surroundings, where a large staff has, through division of labour, been able to accomplish a great deal more than any previous generation of teachers. Few departments in any country have in recent years carried out their duties with more conspicuous success than has the Ministry of Education in Northern Ireland.

When the Northern Government was established there was only one teachers' training college under its control. St. Mary's College, Belfast, an establishment for the training of Roman Catholic teachers, was quickly joined by Stranmillis Training College, where Protestant men and women are educated in close co-operation with the authorities of the Queen's University. Roman Catholic men teachers in training, who are few in number, are sent to an English training college, St. Mary's, Strawberry Hill, Middlesex, there to be taught along with their co-religionists. In order that the training of teachers, the curriculum in the schools and education generally, should be organised along as democratic lines as possible, the Minister has a committee drawn from the general body of citizens of Northern Ireland to advise him on all educational matters, and this committee performs a useful service by keeping him in close touch with public opinion.

With every day that passes the divergent policies of the two Irish Ministries of Education is such as to implant more deeply in the mind of each and every

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pupil of the respective systems a spiritual boundary which will ultimately become of considerably more importance than the already existing physical boundary. Northern Ireland proclaims the modern doctrine of State supremacy in education; the Irish Free State admits that in such matters the State is the servant of the Church. The great struggle for the past century and a half in Irish educational history has been between Church and State for control. The final end of that contest is not yet.

Recommended for further reading

Reports of the various Government Departments of Education.

Balfour, G.: *The Educational Systems of Great Britain and Ireland*. Oxford, 1903.

O'Donnell, F. Hugh: *The Ruin of Education in Ireland* London, 1902.

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